

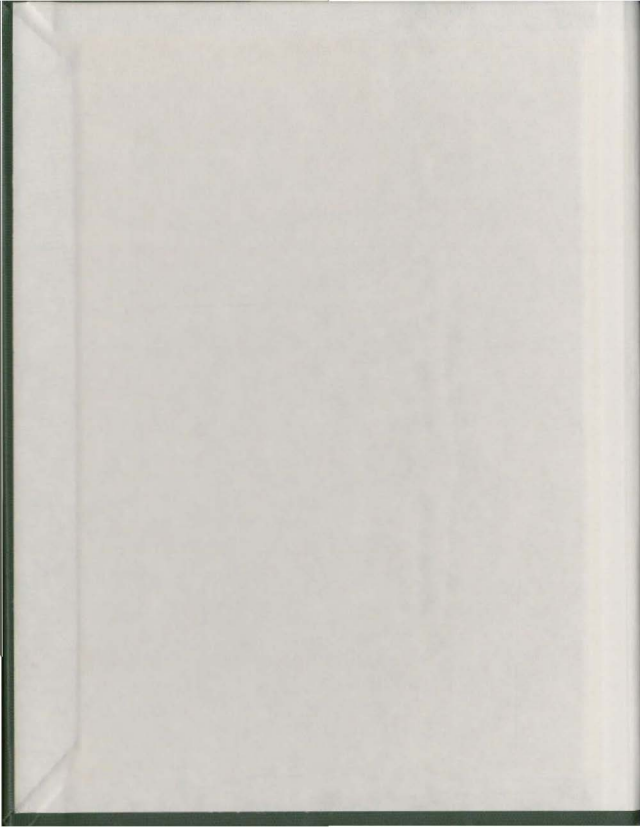
THE CURRENT STATUS OF STUDENTS'  
COUNCILS IN A SAMPLE OF NEWFOUNDLAND  
AND LABRADOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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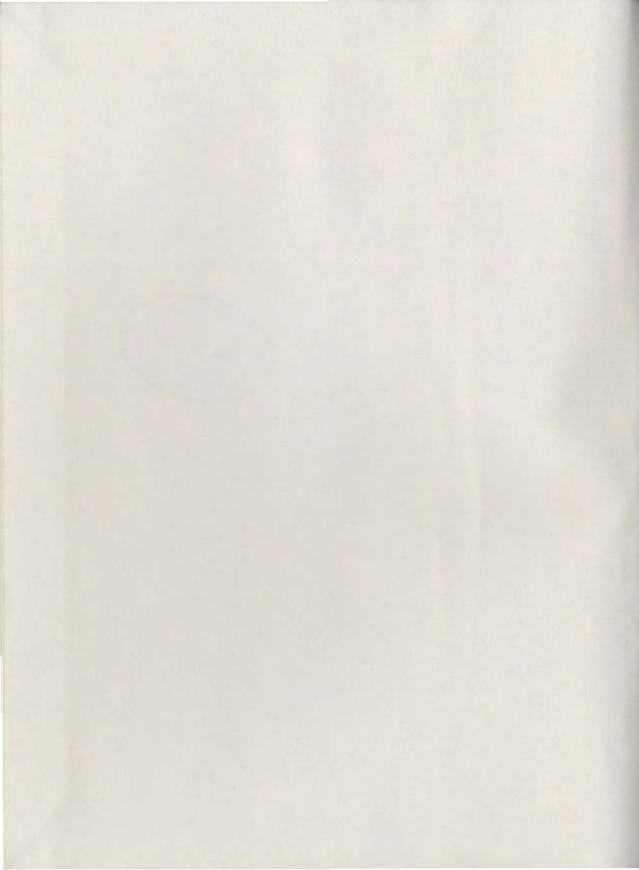
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The Current Status of Students' Councils  
In A Sample of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Senior High Schools

by



David John Mercer

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Memorial University of Newfoundland

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# ABSTRACT

This study described the current status of students' councils in a sample of Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools. Responses to the questionnaire utilized in the survey were solicited from the following in-school groups: administrators, faculty advisors to the students' councils, students' council members, and members of the student body.

This study revealed that students' councils were mostly involved in organizing social and recreational activities, despite the fact that the student subgroup indicated that students' rights was the prime area for concern. The staff subgroup cited student responsibilities as the area in which they would most like to see students involved. An overwhelming degree of consistency was revealed between both subgroups in citing preferred and non-preferred areas for student participation in decision-making. Both the student and staff subgroups claimed that poor attitudes demonstrated by the other, and ineffectual student-staff communication were the major factors hindering meaningful student involvement in decision-making. This suggested that new channels of student-staff communication, perhaps within a new students' council structure, were desirable.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

A. M. Rosenthal cited in Hook (1971) states that,

Freedom of thought, and some form of democratic parliamentary process -- the only form yet devised of translating freedom of thought into political action -- ...require(s) considerable devotion ... (p. 22)

The Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador (1974) show the Newfoundland Department of Education to be in agreement with Rosenthal. The aims, as stated, indicate a strong belief that the desired fulfillment of an individual can only be realized within a Christian democratic environment, and that such an individual

- D. (a) is possessed of ... tolerance ... recognition of the rights of others, the ability to co-operate ... [and]
  - (b) has a lively sense of his rights and responsibilities as a citizen ...
- (p. 6)

Achievement of such educational aims within our school system requires considerable time and energy from educators. The effort by thousands of North American high schools, including many in Newfoundland and Labrador, to encourage the development and operation of students' councils as a means by which students may learn the democratic process, indicates agreement with these aims, and with the statement by Treslan (1979) that,

Freedom to participate in shared decisions with others, and sharing the concomitant responsibilities for all decisions reached should provide a concrete learning experience in democratic citizenship. (p. 10)

These learning experiences form an important part of any high school curriculum. Cope (1920) observes

Whether we will have it so or not, the total social life is a school and is determining, by its teaching power, the kind of society we will have tomorrow. ... Surely then it is the part of wisdom to direct this power.  
(p. 107)

He further states that "... the greatest lesson the school can teach [is] how to live together" (p. 144).

#### Statement of the Problem

That students, as a concerned educational group, should be involved in the decision-making processes in schools, is well documented by an abundance of literature, and by the virtual omnipresence of students' councils. Relevant literature also supports the idea that existing students' councils fall far short of their potential.

The major purpose of this study is to describe the current status of student involvement in decision-making within students' councils in Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools. This study will answer the following questions:

1. What percentage of secondary schools in Newfoundland and Labrador have students' councils?
2. Is effective communication lacking between students' councils and their constituency, the student body?
3. Is effective communication lacking between students and staff members regarding meaningful student participation in decision-making?
4. Is there substantial overlap of areas identified as important for student involvement in decision-making by senior high school students and staffs?

5. Is there widespread dissatisfaction with present students' councils among students, teachers, and administrators?
6. Are students, teachers, and administrators in Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools interested in having students participate in decision-making in all areas affecting students?
7. How do faculty advisors and administrators compare with respect to their opinions about students' councils?
8. Is there a marked tendency for age, grade, sex, or academic achievement to be determining factors in establishing:
  - (a) students' council membership?
  - (b) students' council executive positions?
9. Is sex a determining factor in responses given to questions which solicit opinions about students' councils in either of the following groups:
  - (a) students?
  - (b) faculty advisors and administrators?
10. How are students represented on students' councils, i.e. does senior high school enrolment determine the number of students' council members?

#### Rationale

Recently, a number of authors have commented upon the ineffectiveness of the majority of students' councils' activities as a viable approach to political education. Peterman (1969) and Scharf (1976) concur with Keith (1971), who contends that irrelevancy remains a major problem of students' councils. Treslan (1980), in consideration of shared decision-making as a remedy for this irrelevancy, claims that

In focusing upon the decision-making role of students in senior high school control, an

attempt will have been made to prepare the student for responsible citizenship in a democratic society.  
(p. 25)

Previous discussion has suggested that students' councils are widely regarded as avenues by which to pursue curriculum endeavors in political education. Hilda Taba (1962), a well-known authority on curriculum development, states that

An intelligent delineation of concrete and tangible curricula objectives can proceed only after some information is obtained regarding the level on which objectives can be reached by a particular group of students and the emphasis that may be required in the light of their experience.  
(p. 12)

As early as 1938, Dewey emphasized this particular point when he pointed out that "activity that is not checked by observation of what follows from it may be temporarily enjoyed. But, intellectually, it leads nowhere" (p. 110). Further, Entwistle (1971) comments that "it is the beginning of wisdom in democratic government to recognize the limitations upon one's activities and to understand the reasons for them" (p. 45).

The meaning of democracy. Jackson (1981) states the following,

We in Newfoundland, like most North Americans, know a stability and freedom beyond anything that the greater part of the world's people can even imagine. Yet this freedom itself breeds attitudes which could diminish or even destroy it. So accustomed are we to the liberties we enjoy that we are prone to a kind of blasé individualism which makes us indifferent to the political institutions and practises which make liberty possible and sustain it.  
(p. 1)

Sustaining liberty through the politically oriented institution is a

fundamental role of the educational system. Democracy will only continue as tomorrow's citizens are trained today in its basic principles and practices. According to the A.A.S.A.\* (1954), "... a basic premise of democracy is that the people have an inalienable right to govern themselves [and that] ... the fullest possible participation of the people in government [is required]" (p. 340-1).

Treslan (1980), Entwistle (1971), Rejai (1967), and others note that if this principle is to be achieved, certain factors must be carefully considered. Belief in the supreme value of the individual and universal freedom of interpersonal communication must be practised. Such practices will permit equal opportunity in direct and indirect involvement in decision-making, and will demand concomitant responsibility for all participants with regard to decisions reached.

The educational context of democracy. Placed in its educational context, Horne and Dewey, cited in Treslan (1980), point out that, "the involvement of democracy referred to as participatory democracy is of paramount importance to realizing a student component in high school control" (p. 21). This concept of shared decision-making within the educational institution is supported from two perspectives. Initially, contemporary society has a right to demand that democratic practices are supported by school curricula. Simpson (1981) comments, "... society makes or mars its basis - education - and education makes or mars its ultimate expression, its society" (p. 9). As early as 1920, Cope emphasized that, "A democracy is possible only as [it] is developed in

\* A.A.S.A.: American Association of School Administrators.

the minds and wills, in the habits and ideals of all the people. This is the task of education" (p. 5). Nolte (1971) finalizes the argument by suggesting that the process utilized in achieving such a task - that which will provide society with the democratic product it rightfully deserves - must focus on effective participation in decision-making.

A second, and seemingly more observable deficiency, is the democratic expectation of the adolescent subculture. Coleman (1961), and Eggleston (1967) agree that such a subculture exists. Coleman (1961) notes that the length of time spent in school has forced the adolescent to move "... inward towards his own age group, made to carry out his whole social life with others of his own age. With his fellows he comes to constitute a small society ..." (p. 3-4). Within the educational institution, this society becomes a relatively finite system, including two new groups - teachers and administrators. Treslan (1980) states that the school

... is a social organization comprised of the psychological make-up of students, teachers and administrators, interacting in an administratively designed environment of rights and responsibilities. (p. 20)

Treslan (1979) indicates that ideal governance of this social structure must be founded upon democratic principles, and that such principles demand the acknowledgement of all members in a collective approach to administration.

Supporting this idea, McGrath (1970) writes, "... the generally accepted political proposition [is] that in free societies all those

affected by a social policy have an inalienable right to a voice in its formulation" (p. 51). Chesler (1973) concurs with McGrath, noting that only those who are governed can best express their needs and desires. As citizens within their own unique society, adolescents must be awarded the democratic right to share in the formulation of policies which affect them.

Tannenbaum (1968) agrees with Goodman (1962), asserting that educational institutions fail to meet this requirement. He writes that,

To the dozen or so ... who are in control, there is room for initiative. For the tens of thousands ... of workers ... initiative no longer exists. Their activity is group activity on a scale so large that the individual, except he be in a position of control, has dropped into relative insignificance.  
(p. 238)

Maslow indicates the importance of avoiding this situation. His theory of needs attests to the fact that people only do their best when they are free to act responsibly, and are recognized for personal achievement. Maslow (1954) supports this with the statement that,

Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, or weakness, and of helplessness. These feelings in turn give rise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends.  
(p. 45)

Maslow (1954) claims further that satisfaction of the self-esteem need is largely dependent upon the degree of self-actualization, and that self-actualized people are creative and committed to government



by character, rather than by superimposed sets of laws. Many educators question the validity of applying this tenet to high school students, quoting immaturity as a reason to deny students full political freedom within the school. Such reasoning stems from the underlying fear of loss of authority and an ensuing power struggle. Both perspectives have been widely refuted.

As early as 1938, Dewey defined freedom as the ability or power to formulate ideas and to execute them. However, such freedom necessarily implied self-control and became the work of intelligence. Conversely, he noted that when students were denied freedom of political activity, then the activities were looked upon as ends in themselves. Without concomitant responsibility, political activity became associated with impulse and desire, and resulted in immaturity.

Concurring with Dewey, Bettelheim, cited in Hook (1971), claims that, "What makes for adolescent revolt is the fact that our society keeps the younger generation too long dependent in terms of mature responsibility and a striving for independence" (p. 63). It is not argued that students are actually capable of making all decisions which affect their school life, but that they should certainly be involved in the process, and awarded autonomy where possible. Swartz (1977) suggests that although time may be lost through poor choices, the advantages of learning from mistakes should not be denied, particularly where irreparable harm cannot be done. In fact, Argyris (1957) believes that mistakes do not indicate immaturity. Rather,

immaturity is characterized by passivity, dependence, lack of control over the immediate future, and duly developed short time perspectives.

Educators can build maturity positively by allowing students actual practice in shared decision-making. It is very immature, inconsiderate, and erroneous of adults, especially educators, to feel that they have all the right answers, all the time. In noting that shared decision-making is advantageous to educators, Likert (1961), Tannenbaum (1968), and others share Miles' (1965) belief that, "Participation ... is a lubricant which oils away resistance to formal authority" (p. 149). In further defense of student participation in decision-making processes, Herman (1973) asserts that, "[Students] ... are certainly capable of presenting valid alternative views as to how to approach the task of improving existing conditions" (p. 54). As well, they are, "... intelligent, articulate, service-minded, and positively realistic in their approach to problem solving. Involve them" (p. 58).

Student unrest and passivity. Entwistle (1971) raises the question,

Is it inevitable that associations for human improvement must await the stimulus of chronic social disease or can their reformist potential be used to anticipate the conditions necessary for the creation of the good life?  
(p. 100)

A number of educators, who have investigated the social context of education, have commented upon the presence of unrest and passivity among students, and the fact that these pose a very real threat to the achievement of educational goals. Alexander and Farrell (1973) determined that 66% of students polled approved of protest as a viable

means of achieving their aims. Glatthorn (1968) comments that the uncommitted, if not checked, will by force of numbers, turn our schools into 'vegetation and decay'. General distrust with the system and indifference, as a refuge from fear of the unknown, are cited as major contributing factors. Keith (1971) includes irrelevance in school democracy as an additional factor. Unless the real issue, shared decision-making, is dealt with effectively, no change in student behaviour can be expected.

Because it is a mobile force, rebellion has often been perceived as the disorder most easily cured. Nevertheless, the destructive forces attached to mobility demand immediate attention. Hargreaves and Lewin, cited in Entwistle (1971), claim that the associated disciplinary problems result from school sociology. Elsrøad (1970) reminds us that, under the broad canopy of the academic structure we have encouraged students to think for themselves, to debate issues, to challenge traditions, and to examine authority. We cannot assume puzzled wonder when a reversal of this concept, applied to the context of political education, engenders a student revolt. Hook (1971) points out that,

The negative action of the institution to student grievance often appears quite arbitrary and also results in student attack on the 'system'. The school itself becomes the enemy and students turn off to the whole educational process. Effective involvement in decision-making will again foster an awareness of procedures which result in rules governing the institution and its inhabitants.  
(p. 104)

Shared decision-making is widely quoted in the literature as the solution to the problem of student unrest and apathy. Peterman (1969), Moore (1972), Chesler (1973), Lovetierre (1973) and Shanteen (1980) concur with Downey's (1965) comment that,

Social psychologists point out that ... members of groups tend to mediate their differences until a high degree of agreement is reached. When agreement is reached ... members of the group conform with the group norms. (p. 137)

That the adolescent years should be chosen for the introduction of such processes is only fitting, since the unique attitudes exhibited by teenagers make the time opportune. Youth questions, analyzes, and is fully awake to the emotions of budding adulthood. In fact, Keith (1968) believes that the experience gained through the years is the only real difference between adults and youth. Further, because it has a social setting free from the suspicion associated with modern political control, the A.A.S.A. (1944) claim the environment of the educational institution to be more conducive to teaching democratic principles. Initially, it must be shown that the binding ties of a social union will not sustain permanent damage from social storm and turbulence. Fundamental principles and procedures will remain intact. Secondly, the value of group work must be demonstrated. Lorge (1958) agrees with Latham's (1952) assertion that, "The chief social values cherished by individuals in modern society are realized through groups" (p. 376).

A number of writers have commented on the necessity of demonstration in the learning process as it is applied to political education. As early as 1938, Dewey stipulated that, "The lesson for progressive

education is that it requires in an urgent degree ... a philosophy of education based upon a philosophy of experience" (p. 19).

According to the A.A.S.A. (1954),

[If] ... we want the next generation to emerge as dependable leaders and intelligent co-operators in the ... world of tomorrow, [and] the ideals of [the democratic] form of government so ingrained in [their] thinking and acting ... that no other ideals seem tolerable ... it must be learned by living that way.  
(p. 189)

Entwistle (1971) elaborates further, "The belief that knowledge of politics can be gained incidentally needs to be proved; it is almost certainly a pious hope" (p. 109).

Because it is the final stage of growth prior to adulthood, and therefore very similar in most ways, adolescence provides the prime opportunity to educate effectively in democratic citizenship. Effective adult supervision, within the closed social system of the school, can protect against serious mistakes, while youth gains the only missing component, experience.

#### Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study will have significance for educators who wish to promote student involvement in educational decision-making within students' councils. This study will reveal major concerns perceived by students, teachers and administrators as the prime obstacles to satisfactory experiences in shared decision-making. The identification of these concerns will possibly provide a basis for initiating positive change in the functions of students' councils in

Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools.

#### Need for the Study

Farrell and Alexander (1973), Entwistle (1971), Glatthorn (1968), and others note that 'preaching' democracy must be augmented with actual practice, and that such practice will necessarily involve all three sub-groups of the school -- teachers, administrators and students.

Treslan (1977) states,

It seems plausible to conclude that student involvement in senior high school governance through shared decision-making might provide the nexus between what is taught and what is practised, democratically speaking.  
(p. 9)

Information gained from this study should provide an assessment of the problems surrounding the current status of students' councils in Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools. Direction for improvements through greater student input in educational decision-making may be indicated.

#### Delimitations

The four Denominational Education Committees have divided the province into districts, as follows:

Integrated:	21 districts
Roman Catholic:	12 districts
Pentecostal:	1 district
Seventh Day Adventist:	1 district

In these districts, only those schools offering Grade 10 and 11 programs and having a students' council, excepting all-grade schools with enrolments less than 100, were asked to participate in the modified "Student Involvement Survey".

The survey examines the current status of student involvement in decision-making within Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools. No attempt is made to delineate school-by-school. The survey focuses on structures and processes employed in Newfoundland and Labrador senior high school students' councils, and the attitudes and opinions of students and staff members toward these structures and processes.

#### Definition of Terms

Students' council. A group of students elected by the student body, which, using some form of recognized group processes, provides liaison between the student body and faculty.

Faculty advisor. A member of the staff who is present at students' council meetings for the purpose of providing information and advising on appropriate procedures.

Policy. "Any governing principle, plan, or course of action" (Adams, 1971, p. 19).

Decision-making. That aspect of administration involving thinking which results in a choice among alternative courses of action (Treslan, 1977, p. 13):

It is essentially a problem-solving process involving the following steps: (1) Recognize, define, and limit the problem. (2) Analyze and

evaluate the problem. (3) Establish criteria or standards by which a solution will be evaluated or judged as acceptable and adequate to the need. (4) Collect data. (5) Formulate and select the preferred solution or solutions. (6) Put into effect the preferred solution. (Griffiths, 1958, p. 132)

Control. A "process in which a person or group of persons or organization of persons determines (affects) the behavior of another person, group or organization" (Tannenbaum, 1968, p. 5). The process whereby organizational members determine or influence how things get done in an organization. (Treslan, 1977, p. 13)

Shared decision-making. The process by which students, teachers and administrators are jointly involved in the making of decisions pertaining to senior high school control. (Treslan, 1977, p. 13)

Participation. "Refers to formal involvement in general policy determination" (Carr, 1959, p. 2).

Student participation. The actual involvement of students in senior high school decision-making via formally constituted channels within the existing institutional control process. (Treslan, 1977, p. 14)

Student participation in senior high school control. The actual involvement of students, either directly or through peer representation, in those management decisions which govern and affect student academic, personal and social behaviour in the senior high school. (Treslan, 1977, p. 14)



Responsibility. The condition of being held accountable for an action. (Treslan, 1977, p. 15)

Communication. "A kind of interaction in which sentiments, ideas or facts become shared" (Adams, 1971, p. 21).

Senior high school. A standard instruction-time high school offering curriculum instruction to students in Grades 10 and 11 as prescribed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education.

Student. A subset of the in-school community currently enrolled in a Grade 7, 8, 9, 10 or 11 program of studies.

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Related Literature

#### The History of Students' Councils

Students' councils became common in American high schools during the late 1930's. Educators generally agree that the following criteria for successful students' councils exist:

- definite terms of reference
- democratically operated - both in the planning and the functional stages
- a sympathetic principal and staff
- a "stable structure"
- respect of the students

Treslan (1977) indicates that the students' council was the avenue most North American educators chose as a means of preventing the widening of the gap between students and staff. Despite the growth in the number of students' councils, the literature suggests that students have remained the least satisfied group of individuals in the school.

#### The Traditional Students' Council

Entwistle (1971) notes that political education has traditionally taught conformity rather than participation; obedience and respect rather than question and criticism. Although, on rare occasions, actual student participation in decision-making has been noted, the ineffectiveness of students' councils still prevails in North American high schools. In the United States, The National Association of Secondary School Principals has

developed the National Association of Students' Councils under the auspices of the Office of Student Affairs. This Association offers consultation to any school wishing to form a students' council, and distributes a number of publications offering information on procedures necessary to achieve that end. Nevertheless, Ungar (1978) and Gluckman (1977) point out that the constitutional rights of students in the United States are not transferable to groups. Therefore, notwithstanding the right to peaceful assembly, students' councils in the United States have only those powers conferred upon them by school authorities.

The same situation is prevalent in Canada. Jarvis and Mercer (1981), in a survey of twenty-four schools and/or school boards across the nation, discovered that school boards generally do not have legislation dealing with students' councils, or other forms of student government. All authority invested in such entities may be vetoed by local school principals. The following standard characteristics of students' councils across Canada, according to Jarvis and Mercer (1981) include:

1. Statement of purpose - usually concerned with fostering students activities.
2. Elected officials - officials are elected annually, usually accompanied by stipulation of grade achievement.
  - officials include a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and, in a number of cases, group co-ordinators.
  - members-at-large are either class representatives or are elected to the students' council by the general student body.
3. Meetings - are regular, governed by a constitution.

4. Faculty Advisor - all students' councils have one or more advisors from the faculty.

Jarvis and Mercer (1981) note further that while two Canadian Provinces, Ontario and Alberta, have made substantial inroads in the area of students' participation in decision-making, others continue to ignore the issue. Correspondence with the spokesman for a Saskatoon Board of Education produced this comment:

Students in our collegiates undertake many activities dealing with athletics, recreational activities and fund-raising... I believe I would be safe in saying that the present arrangement is seen as meeting most of the needs of both students and staffs. Neither group is very desirous of instituting major changes at this time.

A vice-principal from Labrador quotes the following policy statement from "The Handbook for Senior High Schools in Newfoundland and Labrador":

The school is, in effect, responsible to parents and society. It cannot, therefore, allow students to make its key operating decisions. Yet, it is charged with the responsibility of providing opportunities for the practice of democratic principles.

The Vice-Principal went on to say that,

The main vehicle by which we enable students to learn and practice democratic principles is our Students' Council. A variety of sub-committees function under the guidance of the Council. Overall, a large number of students are involved in these activities.

Frederick (1959) and Robbins (1969) indicate that a students' council is the apex of student activity. They suggest, among other things, that the council should have complete or shared responsibility in all

co-curricular activities of students. Jarvis and Mercer (1981) report that in Canada, shared responsibility in student activities, i.e. clubs, athletics, fund-raising, is indeed the status quo. In not one instance was a students' council granted complete authority for an activity. Jarvis and Mercer (1981) conclude that students' councils, at present, are exercises in democratic principles which, in reality, carry little or no concomitant responsibilities.

#### Criticism of the Traditional Students' Council

Mathes (1975) states that it is "... impossible to inculcate democracy if the training institution is authoritarian" (p. 6). The Alexander-Farrell report of 1973 concurs with this concept, noting that "... are considered to be the training ground, and that educators will be held accountable by the participatory citizen for their approach to political education. In preparation for adult roles in contemporary democracy, students must be given more authority in making decisions about matters which affect them.

In commenting on the situation, Entwistle (1971), Treslan (1977), and others indicate that students' councils tend towards macro-politics, where only a few can actually have a say. The resultant passive use of the vote as a political weapon has been an unsatisfactory approach to teaching the proper concept of individualistic functioning in a democracy. Further, mock activities, which engage the theatrical and encourage the ambitious, have given birth to widespread dissatisfaction with current students' councils. Procedure has become more important than outcome.

The remedy lies within that structure which encourages the participation of all constituents, and enforces concomitant responsibility through penalty of failure. (Such penalties refer to the internal conceptualization of failure, not external punishment. Nevertheless, failure to succeed may have repercussions in the real sense).

Keith (1971), concurring with Entwistle, notes that student apathy, resulting from irrelevant students' councils is a real problem. Students' councils have a history of eliciting the worst from administrators, of becoming cliquish and alienating fellow students. The worthwhile projects for which students' councils have potential are not accomplished. Keith suggests that students' councils must be more people oriented, more representative, and they should have the opportunity to be involved in the truly important issues - the rules, regulations, and activities which govern the students' "in school" lives.

Treslan's (1977) study determined that channels of student influence are virtually non-existent, and that, in the traditional pyramidal school of bureaucracy, power travels from principals to staffs to students, the flow never being reversed. He states that, "Students, teachers, and administrators perceived shared decision-making to be currently non-existent in all schools surveyed" (p. 199), and "... top management decision sources appear to be far removed from students, both in time and space" (p. 202).

Glatthorn (1968) elaborates further on the inability of many students' councils to command the respect of the student body. Students' council members too often are a rather homogenized group, not at all represent-

ative of the student body. They usually desire involvement, are the best dressers, and are favored by the administration. The students tend to regard their council members as an elitist group of administrative "yes-men", and feel rejected. Glatthorn indicates that administrations should encourage constructive opposition from students' councils.

Such a concept is contrary to what Treslan (1977) notes as the paternalistic attitudes of North American adults, who believe that only they are capable of deciding for the child. This belief has resulted in,

1. rigid grade systems
2. obsession with order and control
3. dehumanizing effects of punishment
4. memorization versus thinking
5. conformity versus creativity
6. external discipline versus self-discipline
7. obsession with the past versus the future

(Treslan, 1977, p. 19)

Student potential can never be realized in systems exhibiting such characteristics. Friesen (1970) elaborates further that school staffs cannot assume the universal acceptance of their own ideas.

Glatthorn (1968) and Keith (1971) discuss the inability of current students' councils to mobilize student support. Katz and Kahn (1966) suggest that, "Perhaps the greatest organizational dilemma of our type of bureaucratic structure is the conflict between democratic expectations of people and their actual share in decision-making" (p. 469). The psychological value of shared information with respect to leaders' decisions cannot be overemphasized. Information mobilizes public opinion and students' council members must make a supreme effort to inform their constituents of the various processes and alternatives that are being

considered, and what decisions are made.

Improving and Maintaining  
the Students' Council

Keith (1968) writes,

For the student body, the activities program is the key to the way people learn; it is at least half of the school's curriculum; and it may be the entire school program for those who do not plan academic careers. For student leaders, it may be the first conscious attempt as America's young adults to work together in complex organizations to get things done. Everyone has something to lose if the students' council does nothing.  
(p. 58)

Glatthorn (1972) lays the responsibility for the provision of this learning experience at the feet of school administrators. He warns that,

"... the students' council is a perfect institution for a colony of slaves... A school will get the kind of students' council it deserves. If students are regarded as inferior, untrustworthy, without full citizenship rights, the students' council will become an experience in ineffectual bureaucracy."  
(p. 1)

Glatthorn (1972) notes further three possible administrative approaches and the possible outcome of each:

1. Liberalism will invite apathy. For example, new facilities easily given are often vacated or vandalized.
2. Accession, through fear, will build an atmosphere of student tyranny.
3. Acceptance and concern for individuals will develop self-discipline within the student body.

Nothing good comes easily, however. Chesler (1970) stated that if student involvement is to be more than a cynical hoax, "... (it) will be



expressed in procedures and structures; that threaten major institutional traditions and present ways of life in school" (p. 10).

Students must be involved in issues which are important to them, however trivial they appear to the adults. As Glatthorn (1968) says, "... we need to risk controversy in a search for relevancy" (p. 45).

While relevancy is a beginning, Mathes (1975) indicates that knowledge is equally important. Constituents must be kept informed; possibly by knowing a students' council member personally. Mathes also suggests that the students' council meetings should be open to all students.

Treslan (1977) approaches the problem from a different perspective. The traditional single faculty advisor is perceived as an unsatisfactory liaison between students and staffs. In order to increase first-hand knowledge of student-staff perceptions of real issues, he proposes a 'Control Assembly Model' of student participation in decision-making. Students and staffs share equal opportunity to voice concerns (see Appendix A).

Mathes' (1975) sample of a students' council constitution compares favorably to those examined in the Jarvis and Mercer (1981) survey. However, the samples used by Jarvis and Mercer, particularly those from Newfoundland and Labrador schools, fail to specify democratic student participation in decision-making as a purpose in establishing a students' council. Democratic participation, input into discussion of relevant issues, and more effective channels of communication are some means of correcting ineffective students' councils.

The Responsibilities of  
the Students' Council

The Maryland State Department of Education (1975) states, "... there is a distinct inclination toward participation by all people in the making or approving of decisions which affect them" (p. 7). A study completed by this Department in 1971 determined that students desire to be involved in decision-making in the areas of student curricula, student-faculty relationships, student governance, student discipline and governance, and student records.

Treslan (1977) notes that existing and preferred governance structures differ. Table I summarizes those profiles. Increased student participation in decision-making through practises is indicated as being preferred by all three in-school groups. Regarding students' attitudes, Treslan had these comments,

Student responses regarding a preferred governance structure tended toward the positive extreme in each of the 15 descriptor pairs. They preferred to have a structure that was quite progressive and simple in design, yet one which would portray much originality and considerable permissiveness. This structure was envisaged as possessing a very relaxed atmosphere.

Students preferred to have a governance structure that allowed for considerable student participation, but yet would operate as a highly organized entity. The structure was to be rational and clearly understood by all concerned, portraying a great deal of respect, equality, acceptance, and flexibility. This preferred structure was envisaged as being very informal and highly democratic in nature. (p. 169-170)

Table 2 denotes Robbins' (1969) thoughts on the areas of decision-

Table 1

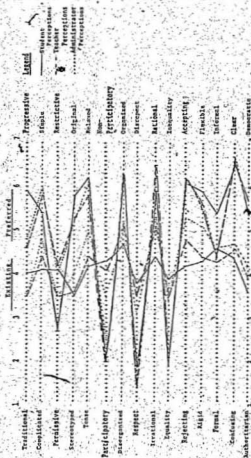


Fig. 13. Summary profiles of existing and preferred governance structures perceived by students, teachers, and administrators

(from Treslani, D.L., Student Participation in senior high school governance: A control assembly model. Calgary: University of Calgary, 1977, p. 185; reprinted with permission).

Table 2

Representative Items in Each of Three Spheres of  
Influence Found Among Students' Councils

No	Responsibility	Shared Responsibility	Complete Responsibility
1.	Hiring and-firing of personnel	1. Assemblies	1. Homecoming
2.	Teachers' pay	2. School spirit	2. Social Events
3.	Noncertified personnel	3. Athletics	3. Charity drives
4.	School maintenance	4. Election of cheerleaders	4. Special committees
5.	Purchase of equipment	5. Interscholastic relations	5. Elections
6.	School buses	6. Organization of new clubs	6. Leadership-training workshop
7.	Cost of school lunches	7. Student-faculty relations	7. Publicity for activities
8.	Course offerings	8. Welfare of students	8. Chartering of clubs
9.	Teaching methods	9. School calendar	9. Congratulatory and condolence expressions
10.	Length of school	10. Promotion of citizenship and leadership	10. Executive committee agenda meetings
11.	Length of vacation	11. Code of dress	11. Suggestion box
12.	Hall passes	12. Code of conduct	12. Evaluation of year's work
13.	Discipline and punishment	13. Foreign exchange student	13. Interscholastic visitation
14.	Homework	14. Promotion of health and safety	14. Cleanup programs
15.	Grades and honour roll	15. Sales projects	15. Constitution revision
16.	NHS selection		16. Information and welcoming service

Table 2 (continued)

No Responsibility	Shared Responsibility	Complete Responsibility
17. Counseling		17. Orientation activities
18. Student enrolment		
19. Academic credits		
20. School finance		
21. School policies		

(Robbins, 1969, p. 81).

making in which students should be fully or partially involved, or not involved at all. He believes that students should not share any responsibility in curriculum matters, or in matters concerning general plant structure and supervision. Responsibility, either shared or autonomous, should be relegated only to areas of high personal interest to students.

Glatthorn (1968) disagrees on a number of points with Robbins. The students' council, he says, should never be completely omitted from participating in any decision-making area. The council's role, according to Glatthorn's viewpoint, should be advisory in the following areas:

- changes in school day scheduling
- length and time of vacations
- proposals for methods and criteria of teacher evaluation
- courses being added to the curriculum
- changes in instructional methodology, group size, and independent study
- changes in school disciplinary policy
- recommend course content
- deployment of school facilities
- proposals for changes in grading systems
- recommend spending practices of school finances

Subject to the approval of the principal, the students' council should have complete autonomy in the following areas:

- establish its own curriculum, to be offered outside regular class hours, i.e. leadership training
- devise its own means of instruction
- develop its own materials
- develop its own inter-community program
- develop liason with other schools
- charter school clubs and other organizations
- develop a calendar of social activities
- raise its own funds and establish policies and procedures for same

- establish its own award system, which will also govern other groups
- hold elections, and develop policies for all other school elections.

Treslan (1977) found that students are likely to desire autonomy in determining courses to be taken, in determining regulations for governing student free time, and in determining the format of the student government. He indicates that teachers are largely unwilling to share decisions with students with respect to curriculum matters, selecting personnel, scheduling classes, school expenditure, school year format, evaluation, selecting an administrator, student progress, and teacher transfer. Further, he suggests that a large number of administrators do not perceive students as being necessary in the decision-making processes regarding texts, teaching methods, selecting teachers, scheduling classes and time-tabling, finances, evaluation (excepting student progress), and teacher transfer. However, Table 3 indicates the more significant decision-making areas, where all three groups are willing to partially share or fully share responsibility.

Clearly, students want a say in virtually all areas of decision-making which they perceive to affect them. While teachers and administrators are reluctant to concede to all demands, they do show a desire to see student involvement increase.

#### Current Trends in Student Participation in Decision-Making

Dewey (1938) commented,

Table 3

Shared decision-making areas preferred by  
students, teachers and administrators

Decision-making Area
Determining type of extra- and intra-curricular activities
Determining discipline standards
Determining rules and regulations for student activities
Financing student activities
Determining student smoking regulations
Establishing rules for student political activity (speakers' bureaus, etc.)
Selecting library books
Developing student timetables
Determining a school drug policy
Determining a policy toward parental or community influence in the school
Determining cafeteria menus
Formulating student committees to meet periodically with the superintendent or school board
Determining student representation at staff meetings

(from Treslan, D.L. Student Participation in senior high school  
governance: A control assembly model. Calgary: University of  
Calgary, 1977, p. 157; reprinted with permission)



... at least one great trouble is that we have taken democracy for granted... We have forgotten that it has to be enacted anew in every generation. (p. 121)

A decade ago, however, the Maryland State Department of Education (1971) noted,

Educators are beginning to recognize that students have the right not to be standardized or coerced into school practices which concern them without some participation in the decision-making process which gives rise to these practices. (p. 4)

Treslan (1977) cites a 1969 study in California which determined that administrators were initiating student participation in decision-making in 20% of the schools in that state.

Peterman (1969) points out that two counts of student protest and walkout were easily solved because the administration was willing to give students more active participation in making decisions in determining curricula and in-school rules and regulations.

Kleeman (1972) reports that the Superintendent of Public Schools in East Orange, N.J., has devised the 'interviewing and screening advisory committee' for recommending the hiring of principals. Two students are members of the committee. No student protest of decisions had been recorded up to that time.

Lovetter (1973) cites instances where students and staffs have worked together to solve problems with cafeteria menus, dress codes, library policies, and student government format. The increase of the principals' influence was noted.

Chesler (1973) cites a study of six schools revealing innovative practices in participatory democracy. The following behaviours were observed:

- a feeling of mutual accountability of both students and staffs
- academic and behavioural improvement through increased self-esteem
- forced confrontation with conflict, and resultant accommodation
- more humane bureaucracy

Noted areas of participation by students' councils were curriculum development, in-school rules and regulations, finances, hiring and firing of professional staff, student population, student activities, and special programs.

Johnson (1978) describes the situation at East High School in Wichita, Kansas, where a particularly flagrant outbreak of violence, assault and vandalism prompted students and staff to work together and design new curriculum content named "The Peer Leadership Program". The program is credited with the following results:

- 46% decrease in absenteeism
- 8.6% decrease in drop-out rates
- 22% decrease in assault
- 25.2% decrease in vandalism costs
- 46% increase in student involvement

Shaheen (1980) indicates that high schools don't have a monopoly on benefits to be reaped from student participation. The Cottage Lane Elementary School, New York, permits all students to take active part on governing boards. Impressive improvements were noted in cafeteria menus, class scheduling, bus rules, and other areas. All rules were

made by shared decisions, and the program was operated during regular school time. Rewards cited include increases in staff professionalism, and student civic responsibility. Teachers did not feel that authority had been abdicated.

According to Jarvis and Mercer (1981), Ontario is further advanced than any other province in Canada in an attempt to involve students in decision-making. In 1979, the Toronto Board of Education initiated a task force to study and revise existing codes of students' rights and responsibilities in secondary schools. The Board has officially adopted the final report of the task force, which states the following functions of students' governments: to oversee co-curricular activities and to speak for students on the issues of school management.

The final revision of students rights and responsibilities includes the following statements:

The student body in every Toronto secondary school has the right to elect a student government and each student has a responsibility to participate. (p. 10)

There shall be a forum in each secondary school for discussion of school issues...acceptable to and determined by the student government, the principal, and the staff...student representation on the forum shall be determined by the student government. (p. 11)

The Carleton Board of Education has set up a Central Students' Council with representatives from all schools. Members of this council serve on School Board Committees.

The Board of Education for the City of Hamilton notes that all secondary schools have students' councils. Student leaders have monthly meetings at the Education Center, attended also by a school board member who answers questions and interprets policy.

#### Summary of Related Literature

While educators are concerned over their responsibility for developing students' awareness of democratic processes, students' councils, as the traditional teaching methodology, are widely considered ineffective. The authoritarian role of the educational institution has prevented the students' council from operating in a truly democratic fashion, particularly in areas which affect students' 'in-school' lives. Consequently, students continue to be the most dissatisfied group in the school, experiencing growth in apathy and political unrest.

Studies show that all three in school groups - students, teachers, and administrators - desire increased student participation in decision-making. Such a self-actualized student body, functioning through a truly representative students' council, can be effective in solving many institutional problems. However, the democratic participation in decision-making, pursuit of relevant issues, and development of more effective communication channels required for such achievement demands major changes in school bureaucratic structures and general school life.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Research Methodology

Research was conducted using a modified form of the "Student Involvement Survey". This questionnaire was designed by the Department of Research and Evaluation, District of Columbia Public Schools, Washington, D.C. in 1973. It determines how students' councils are viewed by students, teachers, and administrators, the nature of communication between the three groups, and the degree of student participation in decision-making desired by each group.

#### The Population

There are 192 schools in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador which offer Grade 10 and 11 programs. Of these schools, 181 were contacted by letter (see Appendix B) to determine how many of them had students' councils, and would be willing to participate in the study. Eleven all-grade schools were not contacted because enrolments were less than 100 students. Ten questionnaires were sent to each participating school (see Appendix C) to be completed as follows:

- Principal or Vice-Principal
- Students' Council Faculty Advisor
- Students' Council President
- Students' Council secretary
- The two oldest members of the students' council who were not members of the students' council executive. If the school were co-educational, respondents would be male and female.

- Four members at large from the student body. Two students were chosen from grade 10 and two from grade 11; a male and a female from each grade; two males or two females from each grade if the school were not co-educational. Each male and female chosen were the fifth male or fifth female appearing on the respective class registers. In the event that less than five boys or less than five girls were registered in the class, the last boy or last girl was chosen. In the event that students were all boys or all girls, the fifth and sixth register positions from each grade, or the last two students where insufficient numbers occurred were chosen.

### The Instrument

The "Student Involvement Survey" contained two parts. In Part I, questions concerned structure and status of the students' councils. Twenty questions referred to meeting arrangements, election procedures and feedback methods. Respondents could choose to answer 'Yes', 'No', or 'Don't Know' by checking the appropriate column. The final question was open-ended.

Part II focused on opinions about student participation in decision-making and about what respondents thought constituted meaningful student involvement. Responses to 25 specific questions could range from 'Definitely Yes' to 'Definitely No'. (An original additional choice of 'Don't Care' was omitted). In order to identify those issues which students felt were most important for them to be involved in, the questionnaire asked respondents to list the three issues that were of greatest importance to them, from a given list of issues. The final question was open-ended and asked respondents to list problems connected with student involvement in decision-making at their school.

### Validity

The "Student Involvement Survey" was validated through a pilot study completed by the Department of Research and Evaluation, Washington, D.C., 1973. Representative classes of the 7th, 8th and 9th grades of one junior high school participated in responding to the questionnaire, which was administered by staff members of the department. On the basis of reactions, questions and responses, the instrument was revised. The finalized questionnaire was then sent by the Assistant Superintendent for Research and Evaluation to the Deputy Superintendent of the Office of Educational Programs and Services for review. The instrument was further distributed to the Operating Assistant Superintendents for comments. Approval for use was thus granted. Once modified for this particular Newfoundland and Labrador study, the "Student Involvement Survey" was presented to eight graduate students from the Department of Educational Administration, and to eight graduate students from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Memorial University of Newfoundland for content validity. Changes suggested by these students were then made.

### Reliability

The modified "Student Involvement Survey" (see Appendix D) was piloted for reliability at Eugene Waters Pentecostal Collegiate, St. John's. A group of 22 grade ten students completed the questionnaire twice, over a period of one week.

Noting the factual nature of responses to Part I, the percentage of identical responses for each student on the two completed questionnaires,

averaged across the group, yielded a reliability of .89.

Utilizing Fisher's transformations, a composite Pearson-Product-Moment correlation Co-efficient was determined on Part II to be

$$R_{xy} = 0.723$$

#### Analysis of Data

The modified "Student Involvement Survey" was used to collect all survey data in this study. No identification of the respondent, other than position, was indicated on the form. Forms were returned by mail. This report is based on the responses of all the respondents. For the purposes of analysis the respondents have been grouped into four categories that will appear in the tables of this report.

1. Student body: students surveyed in the sample schools who indicated they were neither students' council members nor students' council officers.
2. Students' council members (including officers): members of the students' council surveyed in the sample schools.
3. Faculty advisors: staff members of the sample schools who are responsible to oversee students' council operations.
4. Administrators: principals or vice-principals of the sample schools who completed the survey form.

Faculty advisor and administrator responses were identified and tallied separately, as well as by group. Total group tallies for students, faculty advisors and administrators, were further identified by sex.



## CHAPTER 4

### Presentation and Analysis of Data

#### Status of Students' Councils

On the basis of responses received, 62% of senior high schools in Newfoundland and Labrador, having enrolments of 100 pupils or more, indicated they had a students' council. Of these, 79% participated in the modified "Student Involvement Survey" (see Appendix D). A total of 786 questionnaires from 88 schools were analyzed for this report. The replies represented 619 student responses and 167 adult responses, classified as follows: 85 administrators; 82 faculty advisors; 78 students' council presidents; 74 students' council secretaries; 74 male and 110 female students' council members at large; 72 male and 74 female grade 11 students; 69 male and 68 female grade 10 students.

Students' council structure. The title page of the modified "Student Involvement Survey" (see Appendix D) solicited responses from students, faculty advisors, and administrators regarding the structure of students' councils within senior high schools. Based on the responses of faculty advisors, Table 4 displays the percentage of schools in which various executive positions partly comprise students' council membership. The great majority of students' councils elect students to the executive positions of president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, or combinations of the latter two.

Table 4  
Students' Council Executive Positions  
by School. Listed According to Frequency of Responses.

JUNE 1981

Executive Position	% of Schools	Executive Position	% of Schools
President	93	Secretary for Internal Affairs	2
Vice-President	88	President: Male and Female	1
Secretary	72	Vice-President: Junior and Senior	1
Treasurer	66	Group Co-ordinator	1
Secretary/Treasurer	19	Executive Members Without Portfolio	1
Public Relations Officer	2		

Table 5 displays the percentage of students' council members by age, grade, sex, and membership classification, according to the responses of students' council members. According to the data shown, the majority of students' council presidents and secretaries are senior students from either grade 10 or 11. This is striking when one considers that 79 percent of schools participating in the survey offered academic programs in addition to senior grade offerings. Because of the selection of respondents (see page 36), no conclusion can be drawn about the effect of age and grade on students' choice of council members-at-large. In all three categories, there are considerably more female than male representatives. This is particularly noticeable in the executive positions of president and secretary.

Table 6 depicts the percentage of students' council female or male presidents and secretaries in each of these school types: co-educational, all-boys, or all-girls. The fact that the vast majority of students'

Table 5  
Students' Council Membership  
by Age, Grade, and Sex

JUNE 1981

		Students' Council Presidents n = 78					Totals By Sex		Students' Council Secretaries n = 74					Totals By Sex		Students' Council Members at Large n = 184					Totals By Sex	
		Grades					M F		Grades					M F		Grades					M F	
		7	8	9	10	11			7	8	9	10	11			7	8	9	10	11		
Age	Sex	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
12	F														1	1						1
	M															1	1					1
13	F														1	1	2					3
	M															1						1
14	F														1	4		1	3			4
	M															1		1	1			2
15	F															2	16		1	3	4	10
	M															1		1	1	5	8	14
16	F															2	32		1	7	14	22
	M															2	13	15	34	9	14	
17+	F															4	27		3	17	20	
	M															4	16	20		3		
		12	88	37	63		1	3	9	30	57	14	86	5	5	13	30	47	41	59		

council presidents and secretaries responding to the survey were from co-educational schools indicates that school type does not affect the choice of males or females for executive positions.

A graphic display of the relationship between students' council and senior grade enrolments in schools participating in the study is presented in Table 7. While students' council membership tends to increase with increased senior high school enrolments, it is noteworthy that the representative fraction decreases.

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Table 6  
Students' Council Executive by Sex and School Type  
JUNE 1981

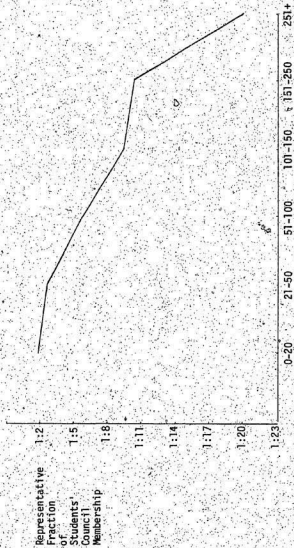
Students' Council Executive Positions	Sex	School Type		
		Co-educational	All-girls	All-boys
President n = 74	F	60%	3%	
	M	34%		3%
Secretary n = 74	F	83%	3%	
	M	11%		3%

Students' council characteristics. Table 8 lists various characteristics of students' councils, abbreviated from questions 1-18 in Part 1 of the modified "Student Involvement Survey" (see Appendix D). The table shows what percent of each subgroup indicated that the given characteristic was common to their school ("yes" column), what percent indicated that the characteristic was not common to their school ("no" column), and what percent did not know ("don't know" column).

The modified "Student Involvement Survey" elicited responses about: procedures for selecting students' council members and officers, methods of representation, meeting practices, and procedures for input from and feedback to the student body regarding council activities. A general picture of students' council practices in Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools emerges from an analysis of the responses. The results reported reflect respondents' perceptions of what exists, and not necessarily the actual situation. Percentages do not necessarily

Table 7  
Students' Council Size as a Representative  
Fraction of Senior High School Enrollments

JUNE 1981



Senior High School Enrollment by Selected Group Sizes.

**Table 8**  
**Status of Students' Councils**  
**In a Sample of Newfoundland and Labrador High Schools**

**JUNE 1981**

Students' Council Characteristics	Student Body n = 283			Students' Council Members n = 336			Faculty Advisers n = 62			Administrators n = 85		
	Yes	No	D.K.	Yes	No	D.K.	Yes	No	D.K.	Yes	No	D.K.
<b>Meeting Procedures:</b>												
Fixed meeting schedule	26	37	33	41	54	2	44	52	0	49	41	7
Non-member students can attend	7	56	33	20	57	20	45	49	2	49	33	14
Council meets during regular school hours	43	45	7	42	56	0	46	52	0	44	55	0
Council meets before or after school	49	28	16	52	44	1	51	44	0	58	32	5
Roberts' Rules of Order used	17	12	66	38	48	10	44	54	1	46	27	22
Non-member students can participate in meetings	8	50	39	18	57	22	43	50	2	44	36	14
Teachers attend council meetings	18	37	42	30	66	2	21	78	0	22	73	4
Special meetings called if needed	63	7	26	85	9	40	96	1	0	95	1	2
<b>Representation:</b>												
Each homeroom represented in council	8	50	39	18	57	22	93	5	0	91	8	0
Grade average qualification for members	14	61	20	18	67	12	17	79	2	19	76	1
<b>Selection Procedures:</b>												
Faculty/administrators choose council members	4	77	14	4	92	2	1	98	0	1	98	0
All students vote for council members	66	22	9	65	30	2	96	2	0	95	4	0
Faculty/administrators choose council officers	4	77	14	4	92	2	1	98	0	4	96	0
All students vote for council officers	66	22	9	65	30	2	74	24	0	80	19	0
Only council members vote for council officers	24	55	18	29	55	3	33	66	0	44	49	4
<b>Input and Feedback Procedures</b>												
Meeting procedures reported	66	31	2	89	7	1	83	7	2	84	11	2
Prior knowledge of council agenda	18	71	7	57	39	1	76	17	2	46	45	4
Can make suggestions for agenda	66	16	13	96	1	1	98	1	0	94	1	4

D.K. = Don't Know

total 100 since all respondents did not reply to every item.

Opinions concerning the existence of a fixed meeting schedule, or times during the day when the students' council meets, are considerably varied across all four subgroups. During meetings, Roberts' Rules of Order, or other acceptable forms of parliamentary procedures are likely to be used by less than half of students' councils. Usually, neither teachers nor students who are not directly involved in students' council activities can attend meetings.

The compilation of responses revealed considerable disagreement between students and staffs as to whether each homeroom is represented on the students' council. While 39 percent of students and 22 percent of students' council members don't know, more than half of the combined student group stated that students' councils do not represent homerooms. Conversely, over 90% of both staff groups asserted that homerooms are represented. Neither subgroup considers grade average to be a prerequisite for council membership. Usually, all students vote for council representatives, both members and officers.

Over half of students' council members and the majority of faculty advisors have knowledge of the agenda prior to students' council meetings. It is noteworthy, however, that most students and quite a number of students' council members disclosed no such knowledge. On the other hand, while the student body responses were somewhat lower than the other subgroups, in all cases a high percentage of all subgroups indicate they can suggest items for discussion at council meetings, and

receive reports of the meeting procedures.

Question 19 asked respondents to describe how often their students' council meets. Respondents could choose either of the following answers: once per week, twice per month, once per month, or describe other existing arrangements. Table 9 indicates the number of students' councils which are perceived by students, students' council members, students' council officers, faculty advisors and administrators to have a particular meeting schedule. Notably, in only 15 schools was total agreement on meeting schedule recorded. On three other occasions, the students' council, faculty advisor, and responding administrator within a school agreed. Disagreements surrounding students' council meeting schedules were recorded as follows: between faculty advisors and administrators, 42%; between faculty advisors and students' councils, 41%; between responding administrators and students' councils, 40%; between students' council members at large and officers, 34%; between students' council members and the student body, 43%; within the student body, 48%.

According to the data displayed in Tables 8 and 9, many students lack knowledge of the students' council procedures at their school. The student bodies are most knowledgeable about students' council election procedures and input-feedback structures. They are least knowledgeable about representation and students' council meeting details. Input and feedback structures to and from the student body, apparently are not well developed. Notably, approximately one-third of students indicated that



Table 9

Students' Councils Utilizing a Particular Meeting Schedule as Perceived by Subgroups

Schedule	Student Body at Large	Students' Council		Faculty Advisors	Administrators
		Members	Officers		
Once per week	34	25	27	23	15
Twice per month	38	21	30	21	20
Once per month	28	15	18	15	27
When necessary	28	26	25	21	17
No answer/don't know	23	4	2	1	7

they have neither knowledge of council meeting agendas, nor receive reports; neither were they aware that they could suggest items for discussion at council meetings. Students' council members are more definite about their responses than are members of the student body at large, revealed by a lower "Don't Know" response rate. This supports the methodological assumption of the study: that the most reliable information on the status of students' councils in the schools comes from those students who are most involved.

Students' council activities. An open-ended question on the modified "Student Involvement Survey" asks: "What does your students' council do?" Table 10 lists the variety of activities cited by the

Table 10

Activities Conducted by Students' Councils in a Sample  
of Newfoundland and Labrador Senior High Schools  
Ranked According to Frequency

JUNE 1981

Students' Council Activities	Student Body n = 283	Students' Council Officers & Members n = 336	Students Cumulative n = 619	Ranking by Students	Faculty Advisors and Administrators n = 167	Ranking by Staff
Social activities	66	69	68	1	63	1
Fund raising	44	55	56	2	51	2
Co-curricular activities	37	37	37	3	37	3
School spirit	20	27	24	4	23	4
Represent student concerns; liaison with staff	12	16	15	5	22	5
Don't know/no response	13	7	11	6	16	7
Charitable functions, community involvement	5	13	9	7	20	6
Graduation	8	8	8	8	15	8
Solicit student opinion	7	5	6	9.5	4	11.5
Purchase equipment for school	4	8	6	9.5	4	11.5
Planning assemblies	2	6	5	11	11	9
School newspaper	4	2	3	12.5	2	14
Student trips	2	3	3	12.5	1	17
Canteen workers	1	3	2	14	5	10
Campaigns, elections	0	2	1	16	1	17
Yearbook	1	1	1	16	1	17
Nothing	1	1	1	16	0	19
Inter-school students' council meetings	0	0	0	18.5	2	14
P.T.A. activities	0	0	0	18.5	2	14

respondents in order of frequency of mention by all student subgroups combined. It is important to note that only eleven percent of students and seven percent of staffs know very little about students' council activities. Staff members are the least knowledgeable of all groups in this area. Social activities (dances, parties, plays, skating) were ranked number one by all subgroups. Responses also suggested that

fund-raising, co-curricular activities (sports, clubs, school spirit) and representing student concerns are other important students' council functions. While not mentioned so frequently, it is notable that 13 other activities were listed. This suggests that students' councils do pursue activities in addition to those most common to school functions. The ranking of "Don't Know/No Response" by students and staffs as 6 and 7 respectively, underlines the lack of awareness of these less popular activities among these subgroups.

Opinions about students' councils. Part II of the modified "Student Involvement Survey" asked students, faculty advisors, and administrators to offer their opinions about students' councils in their schools. Table 11 portrays the responses of the survey participants to questions 1-20 by giving two percentages for each subgroup. The columns labelled "Affirmative" combine the percentages of persons who checked either "Definitely Yes" or "I tend to think so" for a given questionnaire item. The columns labelled "Negative" combine the percentages of persons who checked "Definitely No" or "I tend to think not". Percentages do not necessarily total 100 since all respondents did not reply to every item.

The vast majority of each group of respondents think that having a students' council is important. This is particularly noticeable for members at large of the student body, who indicated previously that they know little of the mechanics of their students' council (see Table 8). While most respondents in each group feel that their students' council

Table 11

**Opinion About Students' Councils  
in a Sample of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Senior High Schools**

JUNE 1981

Statements About Students' Council	Percent of Respondents							
	Student Body n = 283		Students' Council Members & Officers n = 336		Faculty Advisors n = 82		Administrators n = 85	
	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive
<b>General Opinion:</b>								
Students' Councils are important	92	4	96	3	98	0	100	0
Students' Councils deal with important matters	78	17	87	11	75	22	83	16
I am satisfied with our Students' Council	78	19	83	15	68	29	80	12
<b>Receptivity to Council:</b>								
Students' Council decisions taken seriously by staff	77	20	74	25	78	21	92	7
I am interested in Students' Council activities	86	11	96	1	98	1	100	0
Other students are interested in Students' Council activities	83	15	79	19	73	25	77	21
<b>Students' Council Meeting Procedures:</b>								
Should be attended by teachers and principals	70	26	62	33	49	45	50	46
Meets often enough	51	44	55	45	61	37	71	29
Should be open to all students	56	40	34	65	46	51	50	50
Should meet during regular school hours	45	51	49	50	50	48	38	60
Should meet before/after school	63	31	59	37	54	38	72	23
<b>Students' Council Representatives:</b>								
Should have passing grades	47	45	45	52	50	50	52	40
Should receive course credit	13	83	29	69	6	92	9	91
<b>Students' Council Selection Procedures:</b>								
I am satisfied with Students' Council member selection	87	8	91	7	90	8	91	8
I am satisfied with Students' Council officer selection	85	10	93	6	92	6	93	7
<b>Input and Feedback Procedures:</b>								
I get enough information about Students' Council activities	48	46	78	19	75	17	81	18
Students in our school have a say about how things are done	52	41	65	33	64	34	87	13
I think teachers want students to have a say	67	29	70	29	82	17	84	15
I think principals and vice-principals want students to have a say	67	29	64	35	77	22	91	6
I think the superintendent and his staff want students to have a say	60	37	52	37	69	24	80	14

deals with important issues, members of students' councils and administrators are the most likely to attest to the importance of those concerns. The great majority of respondents from each group are interested in students' council activities, and feel others are as well. Nevertheless, the low percentage of students who revealed that they receive sufficient information about students' council activities suggests the need for more effective communication channels. Satisfaction with students' councils in general, and with selection procedures, was highly affirmed by all groups.

The majority of students and students' council members feel that teachers and principals should attend students' council meetings. However, despite virtually 100 percent affirmation of interest in students' council activities, only half of the faculty advisors and administrators agree. With respect to student attendance at council meetings, faculty advisors and administrators are divided on the issue. Students, however, are inclined to have students' council meetings 'open'. Notably, the majority of students' council members are opposed to this idea. The majority of respondents agree that students' councils should meet either before or after school hours, and only administrators are opposed to the idea of holding meetings during regular school hours.

All groups are fairly evenly divided on whether students' council membership should require passing grades, with administrators showing greatest preference, and students' council members showing greatest deference. Neither group favors awarding credit for council membership, although students' council members show the most preference.

The majority of respondents feel that staff members seriously consider students' council decisions. Interestingly enough, 92 percent of administrators favor this response as opposed to less than 80 percent in each of the other three subgroups. As well, responses from each subgroup are favorable to the questions which asked whether teachers, principals, vice-principals, superintendents, and school board staff want students to have a say in how things are done in their school. Of interest, principals and/or vice-principals voted "yes" 80 percent or more of the time on each of the three questions. Just over half of the students' council members feel that the superintendent and school board personnel want students to have a say. Approximately one third of all students think that teachers, administrators, superintendents and their staffs do not favor student participation in decision-making.

Opinions about students' council functions by respondent sex. The survey further sought to determine whether perceptions of students' councils functions, procedures, and problems were affected by the sex of the students or faculty advisors/administrators. Table 12 displays the responses of males and females in these subgroups to questions 3, 4, 9, 15, 18, 19, and 20, selected from Part II of the survey. Percentages may not total 100 since many respondents did not answer every question.

No major difference of opinion between either male and female students, or between male and female staff respondents was noted. However, female staff respondents were somewhat more inclined than male staff respondents to think that principals and vice-principals want students to

Table 12  
 Opinions About Student's Councils  
 By Sex in a Sample of Newfoundland and Labrador Senior High Schools  
 JUNE 1981

Statements About Students' Councils	Percent of Respondents							
	Student Body: Females n = 356		Student Body: Males n = 253		Faculty Advisors /Administrators: Females n = 27		Faculty Advisors /Administrators: Males n = 140	
	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Students' Councils are important	95	3	92	4	100	0	98	0
Students' Councils Deal With Important Matters	85	10	79	18	78	19	79	19
I am interested in Students' Council Activities	94	3	87	8	100	0	99	1
Students' Council Meetings Should be Open to All Students	41	56	48	51	30	70	53	46
I Think Teachers Want Students To Have a Say	70	27	66	32	92	7	80	17
I Think Principals and Vice-Principals Want Students to Have a Say	66	32	64	29	100	0	80	17
I Think the Superintendent and His Staff Want Students to Have a Say	62	35	57	39	82	8	73	21
Students' Council Meetings Should be Attended by Staff Members	67	30	72	29	49	48	50	45
Students' Council Decisions Taken Seriously by Staff	77	22	74	24	92	4	84	16
Students' Council Members Should Have Passing Grades	46	48	47	50	74	26	45	54
Students' Council Members Should Receive Course Credit	23	75	20	76	4	93	9	90
Students' Council Should Meet During Regular School Hours	55	43	51	46	74	23	65	34

have a say about how things are done in schools and that students' council members should be required to have passing grades. Female staff respondents were less inclined than the male staff respondents to open students' council meetings to the general student body.

Opinions about student involvement. Question 21 on the modified "Student Involvement Survey" listed a number of decision-making areas in which students might want to become involved. The survey participants could indicate one of the following: whether they thought students should definitely be involved, whether they tended to think students should be involved, whether students should definitely not be involved, or whether they tended to think students should not be involved. Table 13 on the next page shows the results with two percentages for each subgroup, combining the affirmative responses into one percentage, and the negative responses into another. Percentages do not necessarily total 100 since all respondents did not reply to every item.

There was considerable agreement on all items among students and among staff members. However, students and staffs do not agree with each other that often. While students tend to favor involvement in these decision-making areas, staff members are negative on: textbook selection, rating of teachers, rating of principals, and class scheduling. Eighty-five percent or more of all subgroups highly favor student involvement in: subjects offered, co-curricular activities, rating of courses, school safety and security, dress code, student rights



Table 13

Opinions About Student Involvement  
in Decision-making for Areas Affecting Students  
in a Sample of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Senior High Schools

JUNE 1981

Areas Affecting Students	Verdict of Respondents							
	Student Body		Students' Council Members & Officers		Faculty Advisors		Admin. Staff	
	n = 253		n = 336		n = 62		n = 25	
	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive	Affirm- ative	Nega- tive
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
a Textbook selection	59	37	52	53	28	67	32	63
b Subjects offered	85	13	84	14	72	26	75	19
c Co-curricular activities	90	4	88	5	96	1	94	4
d Student discipline	56	43	49	38	67	32	66	32
e Student grades	39	57	26	58	32	67	37	68
f Rating of teachers	51	45	41	49	35	62	37	62
g Rating of principals	50	45	45	53	37	62	30	67
h Rating of courses	63	29	70	28	70	28	69	28
i School safety and security	85	10	85	13	95	4	89	0
j Dress code	87	8	81	11	87	2	89	9
k Teaching methods	48	48	48	40	34	64	44	54
l Design of school buildings	20	68	29	70	42	52	42	55
m Class scheduling	56	38	57	38	41	56	41	56
n Student rights	94	3	95	1	93	4	95	1
o Student responsibilities	88	8	82	6	99	2	92	1
p School rules	63	22	69	29	65	35	81	16
q Overleader selection	72	21	71	22	78	19	81	17
r Principal selection	22	71	21	76	2	95	5	93
s Teacher selection	24	71	24	74	1	95	5	92
t School board activities	34	62	38	63	14	81	16	82
u Superintendent's activities	25	70	23	73	10	87	9	89

and student responsibilities. Cheerleader selection is highly favored as well, although to a lesser extent. Approximately one third of each subgroup is opposed to student involvement in discipline procedures; and, while highly favored by staff members, approximately one third of all students negatively responded to student involvement in athletic rules. Students are fairly evenly divided on teaching methods, while staff members, particularly faculty advisors, tend to be negative. While all subgroups responded negatively, staff members did so more than students regarding the following: student grades, design of school buildings, principal selection, teacher selection, school board activities, and superintendent's activities. Strikingly, 85 percent or more of the respondents in each subgroup highly favor co-curricular activities, school safety and security, dress code, student rights, and student responsibilities. Students rate student rights as the greatest concern, principal selection as the lowest. Staff members rate student responsibilities as the highest - although very close to school safety and security - and principal and teacher selection the lowest.

Opinions about areas affecting students by respondent sex. The study also examined the opinions offered by male and female respondents about areas affecting students within two major participant subgroups: students and staffs. Table 14 shows the results with two percentages for each subgroup combining the affirmative responses into one percentage, and the negative responses into another. Percentages may not

Table 14

Opinions About Student Involvement in  
Decision-making for Areas Affecting Students  
in a Sample of Newfoundland and Labrador Senior High Schools  
Grouped by Sex

JUNE 1981

Areas Affecting Students	Percent of Respondents							
	Student Body: Female n = 366		Student Body: Male n = 253		Faculty Advisors /Administrators: Female n = 27		Faculty Advisors /Administration: Male n = 140	
	Affirma- tive	Nega- tive	Affirma- tive	Nega- tive	Affirma- tive	Nega- tive	Affirma- tive	Nega- tive
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
a. Textbook Selection	51	43	56	35	25	71	31	65
b. Subjects Offered	85	17	83	13	70	28	74	21
c. Co-curricular Activities	90	3	87	6	98	4	95	2
d. Student Discipline	59	39	56	43	66	34	68	31
e. Student Grades	41	56	36	60	23	70	35	62
f. Rating of Teachers	50	48	50	46	44	56	35	63
g. Rating of Principals	47	51	49	47	44	56	36	63
h. Rating of Courses	59	31	75	21	67	29	70	27
i. School Safety and Security	85	12	85	12	93	4	97	1
j. Dress Code	87	12	85	10	85	15	90	8
k. Teaching Methods	47	51	48	47	37	59	39	59
l. Design of School Buildings	29	70	27	68	19	78	46	49
m. Class Scheduling	52	42	59	37	25	71	46	53
n. Student Rights	96	2	94	2	96	4	94	2
o. Student Responsibilities	88	9	93	5	100	0	98	1
p. Athletic Rules	63	33	69	26	67	34	85	12
q. Cheerleader Selection	74	21	68	24	89	11	78	17
r. Principal Selection	22	77	23	72	0	96	5	93
s. Teacher Selection	26	72	22	74	0	96	4	93
t. School Board Activities	35	62	33	63	7	89	17	81
u. Superintendent's Activities	26	72	25	71	0	96	11	86

add up to 100 since many respondents did not answer all questions.

No major difference of opinion was noted between male and female student respondents. However, female staff respondents are considerably more negative than male staff respondents regarding student involvement in deciding the design of school buildings, class scheduling, and athletic rules. Conversely, even though neither staff group highly favors student involvement in rating teachers and principals, female staff respondents are more receptive than male staff respondents to the idea.

Areas cited as most important for students involvement by senior high school respondents. In Part II of the modified "Student Involvement Survey", Question 22 asked respondents to choose from the given list of 21 areas for possible student involvement (see Table 13) the three areas they considered to be most important. Table 15 on the next page displays the number and percent of two respondent subgroups - students and faculty advisors/administrators - who cited a given item as meeting this criteria. Percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number and may add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses by respondents.

The three areas for student involvement cited most frequently by the student respondents are: student rights, subjects offered, and dress code. The three areas cited most frequently by faculty advisors/administrators are: student responsibilities, co-curricular activities, and student rights. Spearman's rank order correlation was used to determine whether there is a significant relationship between students' and

Table 15

Areas of Involvement Considered  
Most Important to Students in a Sample of  
Newfoundland and Labrador  
Senior High Schools

JUNE 1981

Area For Student Involvement	Students : All Student Groups n = 459			Staff : Faculty Advisors/Administrators n = 145		
	Rank	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents	Rank	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Student rights	1	236	73	3	46	32
Subjects offered	2	180	39	6	20	14
Dress code	3	114	25	13	3	2
School safety and security	4	78	17	5	22	15
Student responsibilities	5	75	16	1	71	49
Co-curricular activities	6	70	15	2	51	35
Class scheduling	7	51	11	13	3	2
Student discipline	8	47	10	4	33	23
Textbook selection	9	42	9	17	1	1
Student grades	10.5	38	8	7	18	12
Teaching methods	10.5	38	8	8	14	10
Athletic rules	12.5	34	7	9	6	4
Rating of courses	12.5	30	7	10.5	5	3
Rating of teachers	14	19	4	13	3	2
Teacher selection	15.5	13	3	10.5	4	3
Cheerleader selection	15.5	12	3	17	2	1
School board activities	17	11	2	20.5	0	0
Principal selection	19	6	1	17	1	1
Rating of principals	19	5	1	20.5	0	0
Design of school buildings	19	3	1	17	2	1
Superintendent's activities	21	2	0	17	1	1

faculty advisors'/administrators' opinions regarding student involvement; (i.e. do both groups consider the same areas to be of relatively equal importance?). The rank order correlation,  $r_s = .82$ , showed that the relationship between the rankings of the students and faculty advisors/administrators was statistically significant at the .01 level of probability in a two-tailed test.

Based on the laws of probability, the chance of an item being selected when a respondent has three choices from a list of 21 is 14.3 percent. It is therefore impressive that 73 percent of the students cited student rights as an area of importance for student involvement. Thus, more than five times the number of students who might have been expected to choose this item by chance thought that students should be involved in making decisions regarding student rights. Thirty-two percent of faculty advisors/administrators, or more than twice the number who might have been expected to choose this area by chance also thought students rights important. Further, more than 14.3 percent of both groups agree that the following areas are important for student involvement: school safety and security, student responsibilities, and co-curricular activities. It is interesting that more than 14.3 percent of students and less than 14.3 percent of faculty advisors/administrators chose subjects offered and dress code as important areas for student involvement. On the other hand, more than 14.3 percent of faculty advisors/administrators and less than 14.3 percent of students chose student discipline as an important area for student involvement.

Notably, the modified "Student Involvement Survey" did not define any of the areas cited in the question. Each respondent replied in accordance with his or her own conceptualization of the issue. The coincidence of student - faculty advisor/administrator opinion needs further definition before any particular conclusions may be drawn.

It may be observed from Table 15 that only the information supplied by 74 percent of student respondents and 87 percent of staff respondents was utilized in analyzing opinions about the three most important areas for student involvement. In the modified "Student Involvement Survey", Question 21 of Part II (see Appendix D) listed possible choices for Question 22 on two different pages. Items 'a-n' were listed on the page preceding that on which items 'o-u' were listed. Comparison of the data displayed in Tables 13 and 16 disclosed that Question 22, Part II had been misinterpreted by 26 percent of student respondents and 13 percent of staff respondents. For all subgroups cited in Table 13, principal selection and teacher selection received the lowest rating of all areas suggested for desired student involvement in decision-making. Student responsibilities was rated extremely high.

Table 16 shows areas of involvement considered most important to students according to total student and staff responses. Percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number and may add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses by respondents. Student responsibilities, teacher selection, and principal selection were ranked by students as 2, 6, and 10 respectively. Obviously, principal selection and teacher selection, items 'r' and 's' in Question 21, respectively, were ranked

Table 16  
 Areas of Involvement Considered  
 Most Important to Students in a Sample of  
 Newfoundland and Labrador  
 Senior High Schools  
 Ranked According to Frequency of Student Response  
 JUNE 1981

Areas for Student Involvement	Students - All Student Groups n = 619			Staff - Faculty Advi- sors/Administrators n = 167		
	Rank	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents	Rank	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Student rights	1	336	54	3	46	28
Student responsibilities	2	231	7	1	91	54
Subjects offered	3	180	29	6	20	12
Athletic rules	4	116	19	8	17	10
Dress code	5	114	18	16.5	3	2
Teacher selection	6	90	15	9	15	9
School safety and security	7	78	13	5	22	13
School board activities	8	73	12	13.5	5	3
Co-curricular activities	9	70	11	2	51	31
Principal selection	10	61	10	12	9	5
Class scheduling	11.5	51	8	16.5	3	2
Student discipline	11.5	47	8	4	33	20
Cheerleader selection	13.5	42	7	11	11	7
Textbook selection	13.5	42	7	19.5	1	1
Student grades	15.5	38	6	7	18	11
Teaching methods	15.5	38	6	10	14	8
Rating of courses	17	30	5	13.5	5	3
Superintendent's activities	18.5	20	3	16.5	3	2
Rating of teachers	18.5	19	3	16.5	3	2
Rating of principals	20	5	1	21	0	0
Design of school buildings	21	3	0	19.5	2	1



disproportionately with the data shown in Table 13. Accordingly, when the responses of those students who chose all three areas most important to them from items 'o' to 'u' were removed from the data (see Table 14), principal selection and teacher selection ranking dropped to 15.5 and 19 respectively. This suggested that utilizing 74 percent of student responses to Question 22; i.e. those students who did not choose the three areas most important to them exclusively from items 'o' to 'u', would yield a more valid analysis of this concern. Other items similarly affected, although not to the same extent, included athletic rules and school board activities, items 'p' and 't' respectively. The same rationale effected the exclusion of 13 percent of staff responses to this question (see Table 15). Cheerleader selection, principal selection, and school board activities, items 'q', 'r' and 't' respectively, were the areas most affected by misinterpretation.

Conversely, student responsibilities, item 'o', was ranked lower in Table 15 than the data in Table 13 would indicate. A possible explanation for this might be found in an analysis of the responses given by those students who answered Question 22 incorrectly. Ninety-eight percent of these students, or 2.3 times the number that might have been expected to do so by chance, chose student responsibilities as one of the three areas most important for student involvement. This suggests that had the question been answered correctly by this group, a considerable number would have included student responsibilities in the new answer, thus ultimately resulting in a higher rank.

Opinions about the most important areas for student involvement by respondent sex. Table 17 portrays the responses given to Question 22, Part II, by students and staffs according to the sex of the respondent, ranked by the female student subgroup. The number and percent of participants in each subgroup are also shown. In accordance with the rationale provided on page 29, 74 percent of the total student subgroup and 87 percent of the total staff subgroup were utilized in providing this information. Percentages may add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses by respondents.

There is very little difference between male and female students' opinions regarding most areas of involvement. However, female student respondents are more concerned than are the male student respondents about student discipline and teaching methods. Male student respondents are more concerned about class scheduling.

Regarding the responses given by staff respondents, males show more concern than females about student involvement in athletic rules and cheerleader selection. Female staff members are more inclined than male staff members to involve students in making decisions about subjects offered, teacher selection, rating of principals, and design of school buildings.

Problems hindering student involvement in senior high schools. In the final question of the modified "Student Involvement Survey", respondents were asked to list the problems at their school which kept students from having a say about how things were done. Table 18 displays

Table 17  
 Areas of Involvement Considered Most Important  
 to Students in a Sample of Newfoundland and Labrador  
 Senior High Schools  
 Ranked According to Frequency by Group Sex

JUNE 1981

Area for Student Involvement	Students - All Student Groups - Females n = 272			Students - All Student Groups - Males n = 187			Faculty Advisors/ Administrators - Females n = 22			Faculty Advisors/ Administrators - Males n = 123		
	Rank	No. of Responses	% of Responses	Rank	No. of Responses	% of Responses	Rank	No. of Responses	% of Responses	Rank	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Student Rights	1	199	73	1	127	68	2.5	9	41	3	27	20
Student Response-Initiative	2	113	42	3	72	39	1	16	66	1	66	44
Subjects Offered	3	91	33	2	79	42	4	8	36	7	32	10
Dress Code	4	70	26	4	44	24	16.5	0	0	13	3	2
School Safety and Security	5	61	19	5	37	20	7	4	18	5	16	15
Co-curricular Activities	6	39	14	6.5	28	16	2.5	9	41	2	42	34
Student Discipline	7	35	13	12	12	6	5.5	5	23	4	26	23
Teaching Methods	8	28	10	13	10	5	5.5	5	23	8	9	7
Class Scheduling	9.5	23	8	6.5	28	16	16.5	0	0	13	3	2
Textbook Selection	9.5	21	8	8	21	11	16.5	0	0	17.5	1	1
Student Grades	11	19	7	9	16	10	8	2	9	6	16	13
Rating of Courses	12	17	6	10.5	13	7	10	1	5	10	4	3
Rating of Teachers	13.5	12	4	14	7	4	16.5	0	0	13	3	2
Athletic Policy	13.5	11	4	10.5	13	7	16.5	0	0	9	6	9
Teacher Selection	16	6	3	15.5	5	3	10	1	1	13	3	2
School Board Activities	16	8	3	18	4	2	16.5	0	0	20.5	0	0
Classroom Selection	16	7	3	18.5	3	2	16.5	0	0	13	2	2
Principal Selection	18.5	4	1	20	2	1	16.5	0	0	17.5	1	1
Rating of Principals	18.5	2	1	18	3	2	16.5	0	0	20.5	0	0
Superintendent's Activities	20.5	1	0	21	0	0	16.5	0	0	17.5	1	1
Design of School Buildings	20.5	0	0	16	3	2	10	5	1	17.5	1	1

the responses given by students (all student groups) and faculty advisors/administrators. The percentages shown are based on the response of all survey participants, including those making no response. The problems are mentioned in the order of frequency of mention by the combined student groups. A rank order is also noted for frequency of mention by the staff respondents. A number of student responses were not relevant to the question of involvement in decision-making affecting students; i.e. frequency of tests, lack of subject variety, and were tallied in the "no response" group.

There was no response given to this particular question by 52 percent of faculty advisors/administrators and 35 percent of all students. The problems cited most frequently by the students, and those cited most frequently by the faculty advisors/administrators were quite different. The students were more likely to cite the attitude of teachers and the lack of effective student-staff communication as obstacles to meaningful student participation in decision-making. A high degree of agreement between all student groups was noted in this regard. On the other hand, the faculty advisor/administrator group was most likely to cite student attitude, apathy, or immaturity as the greatest problems. Students' council members in particular also disclosed concern with students' attitudes. Staff respondents, in agreeing with the students, were concerned as well over teacher attitude, but did not associate principal attitude or unsympathetic administration, in general, with obstruction of meaningful student involvement. Notably, fear of reprisal

Table 18  
Problems Stated by Students and Staff as Creating  
Obstacles to Student Involvement in a  
Sample of Newfoundland and Labrador Senior High Schools  
Ranked According to Frequency of Student Responses

JUNE 1981

Problems	Percent of and Ranking by Respondents					
	Student Body n = 283	Students' Council Members n = 336	Students Cumulative n = 619	Ranking by Students	Staff : Faculty Advisors/Admin- istrators n = 167	Ranking by Staff
	%	%	%		%	
No response	37	33	35	1	52	1
Attitude of teachers	17	21	19	2	6	5
Lack of student-staff communications	11	12	13	3	5	7
No problems	10	10	10	4	7	3.5
Lack of students' council- student body communication	11	7	9	5	1	16
Fear of reprisal	8	7	8	6	0	20
Attitude of students/ apathy	5	9	7	7	16	2
Ineffective students' council	4	7	6	8.5	5	7
Attitude of principal	5	8	6	8.5	1	16
Strict preventative rules	6	3	4	11	2	11
Faculty advisor dominates students' council meetings	5	3	4	11	0	20
Student immaturity	2	6	4	11	7	3.5
Favoritism/jealousy	3	6	3	13.5	1	16
Unsympathetic administration	3	3	3	13.5	2	11
School board attitude	1	2	2	15.5	2	11
Lack of facilities/funds	3	1	2	15.5	2	11
Bussing	0	1	1	17	5	7
Too few students' council meetings	0	0	0	19.5	0	20
Decision time frame	0	0	0	19.5	1	16
Student vandalism	0	1	0	19.5	2	11
Principal hasn't enough time	0	0	0	19.5	1	16

and the domination of students' council meetings by the faculty advisors was not mentioned by the staff group. Students, however, ranked fear of reprisal sixth as a concern. Further, faculty advisor domination of students' council meetings was ranked eleventh, suggesting that students are more than mildly concerned with this issue. It is important to note that all three respondent groups ranked "no problems" high on the list, immediately following the initial concerns. A stalemate was indicated, with both student and staff respondents showing concern over the lack of effective student - staff communication.

Problems hindering student involvement in senior high schools by respondent sex. Table 19 portrays the responses given to Question 23, Part II, by the following subgroups: female students, male students, female staff members, male staff members. Responses are ranked according to the frequency of response by the female student subgroup. A rank order is also noted for the remaining three subgroups. The percentages shown are based on the responses or lack of response of all survey participants, and may total more than 100 due to multiple responses by respondents.

There was no major difference in the responses given by males and females in either of the total student or staff subgroups. However, female students regard principal attitude and student vandalism more so than the male students as hindrances to student involvement. Male students, on the other hand, are more inclined to cite student immaturity and bussing as major problems.

Table 19

Problems Stated by Students and Staffs  
as Creating Obstacles to Student Involvement in a  
Sample of Newfoundland and Labrador Senior High Schools  
Ranked According to Frequency by Group Sex

JUNE 1981

Problem	No., Percent of and Ranking by Respondents											
	Total Female Students n = 366			Total Male Students n = 253			Total Female Staff n = 27			Total Male Staff n = 140		
	Rank	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank	f	%
No Response	1	94	26	1	123	49	1	15	56	1	72	51
Teacher Attitude/Apathy	2	45	12	2	68	27	13	1	0	4.5	9	6
Lack of Student-Staff Communication	3	29	8	3	42	17	3.5	2	7	8	5	4
Lack of Students' Council-Student Communication	4	27	7	5.5	26	10	13	0	0	13.5	1	1
No Problems	6	23	6	4	40	16	3.5	2	7	3	10	7
Fear of Reprisal	6	22	6	5.5	25	10	13	0	0	19	0	0
Principal Attitude/Apathy	6	22	6	9	19	8	13	0	0	13.5	2	1
Student Attitude/Apathy	8	20	5	7	24	9	3.5	2	7	2	26	1
Students' Council Ineffectiveness	9	16	4	9	19	8	13	1	0	6.5	7	5
Strict Preventative Rules	10	11	3	31	17	7	13	1	0	13.5	2	1
Unsympathetic Administration	12	9	2	13.5	9	4	13	1	0	13.5	2	1
Student Immaturity	12	8	2	9	19	8	3.5	2	7	4.5	9	6
Favoritism/Jealousy	12	7	2	12	13	5	13	0	0	13.5	2	1
School Board Attitude	15	5	1	15.5	6	2	13	1	0	13.5	2	1
Lack of Facilities/Funds	15	4	1	13.5	9	4	13	0	0	9	3	3
Student Vandalism	15	2	1	18.5	3	0	13	0	0	19	0	0
Bussing	18.5	0	0	15.5	4	2	13	1	0	6.5	7	5
Too Few Students' Council Meetings	18.5	0	0	18.5	1	0	13	0	0	19	0	0
Decision Time Frame	18.5	0	0	18.5	0	0	13	0	0	13.5	1	1
Principal Hasn't Enough Time	18.5	0	0	18.5	0	0	13	1	0	13.5	1	1

In the staff subgroup, females, more so than males, think that the following are real problems in involving students: student/staff communication, fear of reprisal, student vandalism, and too few students' council meetings. Male staff members are more inclined than female staff members to regard teacher attitude, students' council ineffectiveness, lack of facilities-funds, and bussing as areas offering serious hindrance.



## CHAPTER 5

### Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations

#### Summary of the Findings

As stated in Chapter 1, the major purpose of the modified "Student Involvement Survey" is to describe the current status of student involvement in decision-making within students' councils in Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools. The summary of the findings, based on the responses received from participating schools (see Appendix C), in response to the questions previously raised, is as follows:

1. Sixty-two percent of Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools have students' councils.
2. The most common students' council executive positions in order of frequency of occurrence are: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer.
3. Students' council executive members are predominantly senior students, i.e. from grades 10 and 11.
4. There are more female than male students in all categories of students' council membership. About three-fourths of students' council presidents and secretaries of co-educational schools are female students.
5. The representative fraction of students' council membership to senior high school enrolment is an inverse relationship.
6. The entire student body in the majority of participating schools are involved in electing students' council members and officers.

7. Students' council meeting schedules are varied, and often irregular.
8. The most common pursuits of senior high school students' councils, according to all respondent subgroups, are sponsorship of social activities and fund-raising.
9. A large proportion of students (members of the general student body) revealed that they had limited knowledge of students' council organization, procedure, and activities.
10. The vast majority of all respondents think having a students' council is important.
11. Despite the lack of adequate information, about three-fourths of the students think that students' councils deal with important issues, and are satisfied with what their council does. The majority of staff members also agree.
12. About half the student body were dissatisfied with the amount of information they received from their students' council.
13. Almost half of the student respondents think that students in their schools are not involved in decision-making relating to students' concerns.
14. About two-thirds of all student respondents and more than three-fourths of all staff respondents think that adult members of the educational system want students to participate in making decisions about areas which affect them.
15. The following list ranks the areas identified as important for student involvement in decision-making in order of frequency of mention by students and staff:

Students

1. student rights
2. subjects offered
3. dress code
4. school safety and security
5. student responsibilities
6. co-curricular activities
7. class scheduling

Staff

1. student responsibilities
2. co-curricular activities
3. student rights
4. student discipline
5. school safety and security
6. subjects offered
7. student grades

16. A significant correlation exists between the rankings ascribed to areas for student participation in decision-making by student and staff respondents.
17. Over one-third of the student respondents and half of the staff respondents actually specified problems which they thought hindered students from participating in meaningful decision-making in areas affecting them at their school.
18. The most frequently mentioned problems, cited by students and staffs were:

Students

1. teacher attitude
2. lack of student-staff communication
3. no problems
4. lack of students' council-student body communication

Staff

1. student attitude
2. student immaturity
3. no problems
4. attitude of teachers

19. On the basis of the responses received, students, teachers, and administrators are mutually interested or disinterested in having students participate in decision-making in these areas affecting students:

Areas of Mutual Interest

1. subjects offered
2. co-curricular activities
3. student discipline
4. rating of courses
5. school safety and security
6. dress code
7. student rights
8. student responsibilities
9. athletic rules
10. cheerleader selection

Areas of Mutual Disinterest

1. student grades
2. rating of teachers
3. rating of principals
4. teaching methods
5. design of school buildings
6. principal selection
7. teacher selection
8. school board activities
9. superintendent's activities

20. There is very little difference between faculty advisors' and administrators' perceptions of students' councils.
21. Sex is not a determining factor in responses given to questions which solicited opinions about students' councils in either the student or staff respondent groups.

Conclusions:

Based on the data presented in Chapter 4, a number of crucial issues, relevant to the effectiveness of students' councils in Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools, have been revealed. They are as follows:

1. Existing communication channels between students' councils and their constituency, the student body, are ineffectual.

One-third or more of the student body indicated that they know very little about students' council meeting procedures, and almost half felt they don't get enough information about students' council activities.

2. Existing communication channels between students and staff members regarding meaningful student participation in decision-making are ineffectual.

Students are not aware of the extent to which staff members surveyed support student involvement in decision-making. This was particularly true regarding administrators, in that they were significantly more inclined than students to believe that staff members take students' council decisions seriously, and that they want students to have a say about how things are done in their school. Over four-fifths of administrators and two-thirds of faculty advisors think that students in their school actually have a say about how things are done. Barely half the student body agrees.

3. Senior high school students and staff members were overwhelmingly consistent in identifying areas of importance for student involvement in decision-making.

Although degrees of affirmation or negativism vary, students and staff agree by a 51% or more majority that students should or should not be involved in making decisions about 19 of the 21 decision-making areas cited. Neither staff members nor students indicate an interest in having students involved in all areas of school life. Student rights and school safety and security are identified by both students and staffs as areas of considerable importance. Subjects offered and dress code are of greater concern to students than to staff, while student responsibilities, co-curricular activities, and student discipline are more important to staff than to students. The activities which have not customarily involved students, such as rating and selection of teachers and principals, and superintendent and School Board activities are considerably less important to both students and staff, with respect to student involvement.

4. Dissatisfaction with present students' councils does not appear to be widespread.

Students and staff members think that students' councils are important and that they deal with important issues. Nevertheless, students express some dissatisfaction with their students' council functions.

The results of the study indicate that students' councils attend chiefly to the customary council functions of sponsoring social and recreational activities. Decision-making areas in which students wish them to have a say are seemingly ignored. This discrepancy may account for the fact that barely half of the students think that they have a say about how things are done in their school. Further, such irrelevancy may contribute to student apathy, a major problem cited by the staff subgroup as hindering student involvement in decision-making. Staff satisfaction with student involvement may be indicated by the fact that co-curricular activities, a popular students' council function, ranked high in importance to the staff subgroup.

5. Faculty advisors and administrators compare favorably with respect to their opinions about students' councils.

While there is considerable agreement between these two subgroups, faculty advisors are consistently less satisfied with the status quo than are the administrators. Notably, they are less inclined to believe that staff members take students' council decisions seriously, that councils meet often enough, that students actually have a say about how things

are done in their school, or that administrative and school board staff want students to have a say. Faculty advisors are more inclined than administrators to hold council meetings during regular school hours.

6. There is a marked tendency for age, grade, and sex to be determining factors in establishing students' council membership:

The vast majority of students' council executive positions are held by senior high students aged 15 years old or more. No conclusion could be drawn about the effect of age and grade on membership at large. However, females outnumber males in all positions, particularly as students' council executives.

7. Sex is not a determining factor in responses given to questions which solicit opinions about students' councils in either the student or staff subgroup.

There was a high degree of consistency in responses given by males and females in both the student and staff subgroups.

8. Students' council representation is inversely linked to the enrolment of grades 10 and 11.

This suggests that as schools grow larger, the opportunity for students to know their students' council representative on a personal basis drastically decreases, thereby



effectively reducing a student's chance to have direct input into decision-making processes, and to receive direct feedback about outcomes. Again, this situation may be aggravating the growth or existence of student apathy.

#### Recommendations

Comparison of the findings of the modified "Student Involvement Survey" with the related literature (Chapter 2), has indicated a number of areas wherein improvements may assist students' councils in this province to achieve their potential. They are as follows:

1. Considering the role education must play in fostering democratic societies, all schools should be encouraged to involve students in political education programs, which, by definition, would ensure that students and staffs share decision-making in areas of mutual concern. This should be a concern of the Provincial Department of Education.
2. Based on the literature, students' council representation should be increased to personalize the involvement of the entire student body in decision-making processes. Suggested representative fractions range from 1:5 to 1:10, depending on school size. Table 7 shows that students' councils in schools which have senior student enrolments greater than 100, represent that portion of their constituencies by ratios exceeding 1:10. Further, the majority of participating

schools (see Appendix C) offer academic programs in addition to grades 10 and 11, i.e. grades 7, 8 and 9, thus drastically increasing student population. This suggests that students' council representation, at present, is far less than desired in most Newfoundland and Labrador senior high schools.

3. The literature supports the idea that students' councils should meet at least two times per month. The students' council executive should meet prior to these times to plan agendas carefully. Thus, executives would meet at least four times per month, twice alone, and twice within the council forum. According to participants' responses, most students' councils have an irregular meeting schedule, tending to meet only when something important arises.
4. Students' council pursuits should concentrate on decision-making areas which are relevant to students' initial concerns, namely, those areas of mutual concern for student involvement expressed by the student and staff subgroups.
5. The data displayed in Chapter 4 indicates that a new forum is needed to increase the liaison between students and staffs. The fact that teachers, in general, had very little contact with the students' council is revealed in Table 8, i.e. teachers, for the most part, do not attend students' council meetings. Yet, student respondents, according to the data shown in Table 11, feel that teachers should be actively involved. Thus, the fact that students ranked 'lack of student-staff communication' as the second greatest

problem actually hindering meaningful student involvement in decision-making supports this conclusion. Perhaps a forum such as Treslan's (1977) "Control Assembly" (see Appendix A) would meet the requirements.

#### Considerations for Future Study

1. While some research is available, the idea that student involvement in decision-making is an integral part of the total educational process and, thereby, a safeguard to democracy needs further analysis. Further, the theory that participation in decision-making enhances subordinates' willingness to comply with the demands of the bureaucratic structure is largely derived from research in the business world. The validity of the application of these findings to the educational institution needs further analysis.
2. Student apathy and immaturity, in the colloquial sense, are real concerns of educators. The literature supports the view that this phenomenon is a 'self-fulfilling prophecy', i.e. the less students are involved in meaningful decision-making, the more irresponsible they become, and the less staff members trust them. Further study concerning this theory will be required to facilitate a change in teacher support of shared decision-making in schools.
3. Existing theories concerning methods of student-staff communication need to be tested for effectiveness.

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## APPENDIX A

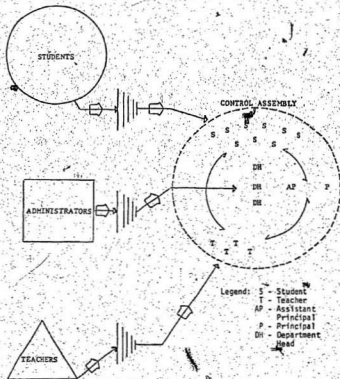


Fig. 20 Control assembly development.

(from Treslan, D.L., Student Participation in senior high school governance: A control assembly model. Calgary:University of Calgary, 1977, p. 185; reprinted with permission).

98 Newtown Road  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1B 3A7

March 4, 1981

Dear

As a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, I am interested in examining the extent to which students within Senior High School Students' Councils participate in decision-making. Dr. Frank Cramm, Head of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, is supervising my work in this regard.

I am presently seeking the assistance of Senior High School Principals in this endeavour. Schools which have Students' Councils will be forwarded a questionnaire to be completed by the following personnel:

Principal or Vice Principal; Faculty Advisor;  
Students' Council President and Secretary;  
2 Students' Council members at large; and  
4 members of the student body.

If your school has a Students' Council, could you assist me in this project? Please check the appropriate box on the form below, clip, and return via the enclosed envelope at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely yours,

FRANK CRAMM

DAVID MERCER

My school will participate.

☐

My school is unable to participate since we have no Students' Council.

☐

My school has a Students' Council but we do not wish to participate.

☐

## APPENDIX C

List of Schools Participating in  
Modified Student Involvement Survey

## Integrated Districts

Vinland:

James Cook Memorial All Grade  
Gunner's Cove All Grade  
Mary's Harbour All Grade  
Pistolet Bay All Grade  
Harriott Curtis Collegiate (7-11)

Green Bay:

Harbour View Academy (3-11)  
Cape John Collegiate (7-11)  
Dorset Collegiate (7-11)

Terra Nova:

Cammanville All Grade  
Dover All Grade  
Holy Cross Central High (7-11)  
Fogo Central High (9-11)  
Gander Collegiate (9-11)  
Musgrave Harbour All Grade  
Centennial Central High (7-11)

Bay D'Espoir:

King Academy Central High (7-11)

Straits of Belle Isle:

St. Augustine's Central High (7-11)  
Canon Richards Central High (7-11)

Deer Lake:

Hampden Central High (7-11)

Exploits Valley:

Botwood Sr. High (10-11)  
Buchans Public High (7-11)  
G.F.A. Regional High (9-11)  
W. Bramwell Booth Memorial (7-11)

Bonavista-Trinity-Placentia:

Cabot Collegiate (8-11)  
T.A. Lench Memorial Regional High (9-11)  
Clarenville High (8-11)  
Random Island Integrated (K-11)  
Musgravetown Central High (8-11)  
Bishop White All Grade

Port aux Basques:

St. James Regional High (9-11)

Avalon North:

Ascension Collegiate (9-11)  
James Moore Central High (7-11)  
St. Paul's Central High (7-11)  
St. George's Regional High (10-11)  
Holy Trinity Central High (7-11)  
Persalvic Central High (7-11)  
Jackson Walsh Central High (8-11)

Burin Peninsula:

Fortune Collegiate (8-11)  
John Burke High (9-11)  
Pearce Regional High (9-11)

St. Barbe South:

Holland's Memorial Central High (7-11)  
Jakeman Central High (7-11)

Conception Bay South:

Queen Elizabeth Regional High (9-11)

Avalon Consolidated:

St. Boniface Central High (7-11)  
Mt. Pearl Central High (7-11)

Integrated Districts (continued)

Cape Freels:

St. Augustine's Central High (7-11)  
Lester B. Pearson Central High (8-11)

Ramea:

St. Boniface Central High (7-11)

Bay of Islands-St. George's:

Herdman Collegiate (10-11)  
Stephenville Central High (7-11)

Labrador East:

Goose High (9-11)  
Amos Comenius Memorial (K-11)  
Jens Havel Memorial (K-11)

Labrador West:

Manihick High (7-11)  
J.R. Smallwood Collegiate (K-11)

Roman Catholic Districts

Humber-St. Barbe:

Regina Sr. High (9-11)  
Presentation Central High (7-11)  
Cabrini Central High (7-11)  
Xavier Central High (7-11)  
Roncalli High (7-11)

St. John's:

St. Edward's Regional High (9-11)  
St. Kevin's All Grade  
Brother Rice Boys High (9-11)  
Gonzaga Boys Regional High (9-11)  
Holy Heart of Mary Regional High (9-11)  
Holy Trinity All Grade

Port aux Port:

Bishop O'Reilly High (7-11)  
St. Stephen's High (9-11)

Conception Bay Centre:

Roncalli Central High (7-11)

Exploits-White Bay:

St. Pius X High (7-11)

Piacentia-St. Mary's:

Our Lady Mt. Carmel Central High  
(7-11)  
Fatima Central High (7-11)  
Enright All Grade  
Dunne Memorial (4-11)  
St. Ann's Central High (8-11)

Bay St. George:

St. Joseph's High (8-11)  
Assumption Central High (8-11)  
Belanger Memorial High (8-11)

Ferryland:

Mobile Central High (7-11)  
Stella Maris Central High (7-11)

Labrador:

Our Lady Queen of Peace (K-11)  
Labrador City Collegiate (7-12)  
Our Lady of Labrador All Grade

Burin Peninsula:

St. Bernard's Central High (7-11)

## Pentecostal District

Ralph Laite Collegiate (7-11)

A.C. Palmer Collegiate (7-11)

\* E. Vaters Pentecostal Collegiate (7-11)

A. Garrigus Collegiate (7-11)

## Seventh Day Adventist District

Seventh Day Adventist Academy (K-11)

\* The services of students at E. Vaters Pentecostal Collegiate were utilized in determining reliability coefficients.



# APPENDIX D

## Student Involvement Survey

I wish to know what you think about your Students' Council, and your opinion about the role of students in making decisions that affect them. When you have completed this questionnaire, seal it in the envelope provided and give it to the Principal. Thank you for your help in this regard.

General Information:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 1981

Students only should complete part A; Faculty Advisors part B, and Administrators part C.

Part A: Age \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Place an "X" in the appropriate spaces:

Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Students' Council President \_\_\_\_\_

Students' Council Secretary \_\_\_\_\_ Students' Council Member \_\_\_\_\_  
(other than an officer)

Not a Students' Council Member \_\_\_\_\_

Part B: Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

How many members does your Students' Council have? \_\_\_\_\_

List the executive positions of your Students' Council.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Part C: Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

How many grade ten students are in your school? \_\_\_\_\_

How many grade eleven students are in your school? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your school - all boys? \_\_\_\_\_ - all girls? \_\_\_\_\_

- co-educational? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your school - all grade? \_\_\_\_\_ - regional high? \_\_\_\_\_

- central high? \_\_\_\_\_

## Part I

Answer the following by placing a check in the column of your choice for each question. (In this questionnaire students' council and student government mean the same thing.)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Is there a schedule for your students' council meetings?			
2. Can students who are not students' council members attend council meetings?			
3. Does your students' council meet during regular school hours?			
4. Does your students' council meet either before or after school?			
5. Are parliamentary procedures (Roberts' Rules of Order) used in the students' council meetings?			
6. Does each homeroom (section) have at least one representative on the students' council?			
7. Does the teacher, principal, or other school staff members choose the students' council?			
8. Do students vote for students' council members?			
9. If you are not elected to the students' council, can you participate in its meetings?			
10. Are passing grades required to become a member of the students' council?			
11. Does the teacher, principal, or other staff members choose the students' council officers?			
12. Do all students vote for the students' council officers?			
13. Do only students' council members vote for students' council officers?			
14. Do teachers (other than the council advisor) go to the council meetings?			
15. Are you told about what happens at students' council meetings?			
16. Do you know ahead of time what will be discussed at the students' council meetings?			

Yes No Don't Know


17. Can you make suggestions about what will be discussed at the students' council meetings?
18. Does your students' council call special or additional meetings?
19. How often is your students' council scheduled to meet? (check one)

☐ Once a week?

☐ Two times a month?

☐ Once a month?

☒ Other (tell when) \_\_\_\_\_

20. What does your students' council do? (For example: what kinds of activities, school matters, issues, concerns)

## Part II

Give YOUR OPINION on the following questions by placing a check in the column which indicates your feeling about each question.

1. Should teachers and principals attend students' council meetings?
2. Do you think that you get enough information about students' council activities?
3. Do you think it is important to have a students' council?
4. Does your students' council deal with matters you think are important?
5. Do you think that students' council decisions are taken seriously by teachers, principal, and other staff members?
6. Are you satisfied with the way in which your students' council members are selected?
7. Are you satisfied with the way in which your students' council officers are selected?
8. Should passing grades be required to become a member of the students' council?
9. Are you interested in your students' council activities?
10. Do you think other students are interested in your students' council activities?
11. Are you satisfied with the actions taken by your students' council?
12. Do you think students in your school have a say about how things are done in your school?

[illegible]

13. Should students get course credit for being a students' council member?
14. Do you think your students' council meets often enough?
15. Do you think your students' council meetings should be open to all students?
16. Should your students' council meet during regular school hours?
17. Should your students' council meet either before or after school?
18. Do you think that teachers want students to have a say about how things are done in this school?
19. Do you think that principals and vice-principals want students to have a say about how things are done in your school?
20. Do you think that the superintendent and his staff want students to have a say about how things are done in this school?
21. Do you think that students should have a say about the following:
  - a. textbook selection
  - b. subjects offered
  - c. co-curricular activities
  - d. student discipline
  - e. student grades
  - f. rating of teachers
  - g. rating of principals
  - h. rating of courses
  - i. school safety and security
  - j. dress code
  - k. teaching methods
  - l. design of school buildings
  - m. class scheduling
  - n. student rights

21. (continued) Do you think that students should have a say about the following:

- o. student responsibilities
- p. athletic rules
- q. cheerleader selection
- r. principal selection
- s. teacher selection
- t. school board activities
- u. superintendent's activities

Definitely Yes	I tend to think so	I tend to think not	Definitely No

22. From the list in number 21, write, in rank order, the three which are most important to you.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

23. List the problems (if any) at your school that you think keep students from having a say in how things are done in this school. (Write on back if more space is needed).

